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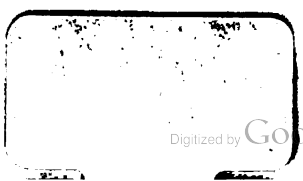
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THE

GREEK TRAGIC THEATRE:

CONTAINING

ÆSCHYLUS BY DR. POTTER,

SOPHOCLES BY DR. FRANCKLIN,

AND

EURIPIDES BY MICH. WODHULL, ESQ.

A NEW EDITION,

Revised and corrected throughout by the Translator;

WITH

A DISSERTATION ON ANTIENT TRAGEDY,

BY THOMAS FRANCKLIN, D. D.

LATE GREEK PROFESSOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

Vol. I

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PREFACE.

EURIPIDES was born in the island of Salamis, in the seventy-fifth Olympiad; his parents Mnesarchus and Clito having retired thither from Athens at the time that city was menaced by the powerful armament of Xerxes. Historians are by no means agreed as to the rank of our Poet's Father and Mother: the proofs which some endeavour to adduce of their nobility do not appear by any means convincing; and if we admit the oracle of Apollo to have been consulted by them during the pregnancy of Clito, in regard to the fortunes of their future Child, as an attention to the voice of soothsayers is by no means peculiar to those of high birth or affluence, it might be too precipitate to conclude from thence, with Bayle, either that her station in life was superior to that of an herb-woman, or that the distressed circumstances of her Husband were not among his principal motives for changing the place of his abode. But whatever may have been the rank or occupation of Mnesarchus and Clito, they appear to have possessed the honourable title of free-born citizens of Athens.

The day on which Euripides came into the world was peculiarly auspicious to his country,

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being that of the Greeks' obtaining a decisive victory over the Persian fleet, an event, to which he is supposed by Barnes and the ablest critics to have alluded, in his description of the sacred tapestry with which Ion decorated the tent he erected at Delphi; a gross breach of chronology it must be owned, but such as the spirit of national glory has always been found not only to excuse, but applaud in a dramatic writer.

In his youth, Euripides was brought up to the gymnastic exercises; he moreover acquired sufficient knowledge in painting to be considered as one of the antient artists by the writers who have treated on that subject: but he gave early hopes of becoming more distinguished by his philosophical studies, and continued to be a pupil of Anaxagoras, whose lessons he attended with great assiduity, till finding his master exposed to persecution from his ardent search after wisdom, and in imminent danger of losing his life, he at about the age of eighteen applied himself to Dramatic Poetry; but amidst these more attractive employments was never unmindful of the strict precepts which he had imbibed in his tender years: the attachment to real virtue so strongly displayed in his writings, and his invariable enmity to every species of Tyranny and Superstition, have secured to him that applause which mere genius is incapable of attaining; and it is with justice that he is considered by posterity as one of those few real Sages who

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have indeed employed fiction, but employed it principally as a vehicle for the noblest truths. That Euripides did not, with the garb and profession, by any means lay aside the study of Philosophy, is apparent, not only from the whole tenour of his works, but from the well-known intimacy of his friendship with the immortal Socrates; nor can it be unseasonable here to observe, that his superior success in the attempts he made to instruct mankind, may be attributed to his having artfully blended the lessons he gave to his countrymen with interesting tales of Gods and Heroes, and formed an admirable combination of amusement with the most wholesome precepts that ever dignified the strain of the moral Muse.

The events transmitted to us of Euripides's life, though extended to no inconsiderable length by Barnes and Bayle, are very few in number; and we may collect from thence, that he passed most of his days in that unambitious retirement from public affairs, which is the usual sphere of a man deeply engaged in literary pursuits: the biographers record that he was twice married, and proved each time so unsuccessful in his choice, that his frequently speaking in harsh terms of the female sex may in a great measure be ascribed to domestic grievances, and the licentious conduct of his Wives, to whom they also impute his leaving Athens at an advanced age, and going to the court of Archelaus king of Macedon, by whom

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he was received with distinguished honours. After residing at Pella about three years, he came to an unfortunate end: the general account is, that he was torn to pieces by hounds; but the circumstances of his death are variously represented; some have ascribed it to the malice of his enemies, others to mere accident, and suppose that his meditations caused him to wander too far into a wood: he appears, at the time this calamity befel him, to have been more than seventy years old.

Archelaus caused the remains of the Tragic Bard to be interred at Pella with great funereal magnificence. No sooner did the account of his death reach Athens, than he was universally lamented by his countrymen; Sophocles, like a generous rival, appeared drest in mourning, and introduced his actors on the stage without garlands. The road leading from the city to the Piræus, was the spot pitched upon by the Athenians for erecting a monument in honour of Euripides. Though the pieces he composed were numerous, being according to some writers seventy-five, and according to others ninety-two, Moschopulus says he gained only five prizes, four while living, and one after his death: some years, however, before he retired to Macedon, Plutarch relates, in his Life of Nicias, that several Athenian soldiers whom the Sicilians had taken prisoners; by repeating to their conquerors some verses of Euripides, obtained the kindest

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treatment, and a speedy release from their captivity.

Longinus celebrates Euripides for his peculiar excellence in describing Love and Madness: talents for moving pity in a superior degree to any other dramatic writer, have been with one consent allowed to be his characteristic. Quintilian recommends his Tragedies in the strongest terms to pleaders at the bar; and it would here be easy to fill many pages with testimonies highly honourable to him, both from the antients and moderns: but the merits of Euripides are so generally known, that I shall not attempt to enter on a minute discussion of them, being sensible that the translator of a favourite Author is of all men least adequate to the province of impartial Criticism.

A considerable portion of my time has for several years been employed in either forming or revising this version, which I submit to the decision of the Public, and am by no means sanguine in my hopes of its success: but whatever reception this undertaking may meet with, I shall never be brought to consider any labours as utterly fruitless which have introduced me to a more intimate knowledge of these valuable remains of antiquity, than I should otherwise in all probability have acquired. Such a search as seemed absolutely necessary into most of the comments and various readings, poured in abundantly from

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every quarter, very considerably retarded my progress, but has not been without its use, in enabling me to rectify some material errors which had escaped notice: after all the circumspection I have made use of, the number of my inaccuracies will I fear be found considerable, and would inevitably have been much greater, but for the kindness of those learned Friends who have taken the trouble of comparing my translation with the original, in passages where the Author's sense seemed most dubious. Another Gentleman, who died about six years ago, leaving those who had the happiness of knowing him every reason to regret his loss, favoured me at an early period with some useful remarks on my version of the Orestes, and agreed with me that the subjoining to it a short History of the House of Tantalus might be of service, towards making events with which the greater part of Euripides's Tragedies have some degree of connection, better known to such readers as are not intimately conversant with the mythological records of those times, than could have been done by splitting what is there collected into a variety of detached notes.

As for any help beyond what is already mentioned, I have had no coadjutor, either in the translation or notes, some of which I am sensible will to many be uninteresting, but are inserted through a mere principle of self-defence, as vouchers for my interpretation. The groundwork on which I proceeded has been Barnes's

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valuable edition: of this, as near ninety years are now elapsed since its publication, I may be indulged with the more freedom in speaking my sentiments: to that learned Commentator I feel myself under a multitude of obligations, which I shall always acknowledge with pleasure: if it be objected that some of his notes are prolix and desultory, it ought to be remembered on the other hand, that he had not only a considerable skill in verbal criticism, but always availed himself of extensive reading, aided by a peculiar happiness of memory, for illustrating the mythology and customs of the Antients, and throwing the clearest light on some passages which before were either totally misunderstood, or considered as unintelligible. But such is the imperfection of human capacity, that no editions are exempt from many defects. In the copy of Barnes which I made use of, I have from time to time written down on the margin such corrections or variations as occurred to me on perusing the notes of Valkenaer, Mr. Markland, Dr. Musgrave, Mr. Tyrwhitt, Brunck, and others; most of which, especially those which were so material as in any degree to interest an English reader, I afterwards examined with a greater degree of attention in revising my translation. The Index subjoined to the third volume is meant to assist the English reader, and supply the most material interpretations left deficient in my notes, which are sometimes, I perceive, too thinly scattered, especially in the Fragments.

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Wherever the antient Editions are cited, I have seldom failed turning to the passage in them, or consulting a quotation in its original Author before I ventured to transcribe it: but even in these respects the library of an obscure individual will not always second the wishes of its owner, or enable him to proceed uniformly in his search; nor must I omit mentioning among its deficiencies that of frequently reducing me to give my own version of lines quoted from the Poets, because I had none to copy. In regard to Manuscripts, wherever they are mentioned, I produce my vouchers, and am not able to say any thing from myself: to such readings, brought forward by later Editors, as are founded on their joint concurrence, I have considered the utmost deference as due: these I am very happy to find are by far less numerous *and less violent in their operation* than I had been taught to apprehend. As for mere conjectural alterations, from whatever quarter they proceed, or however eagerly they are maintained, they are universally allowed to be extremely dangerous auxiliaries to a translator, unless their boasted acuteness and ingenuity is corroborated by a necessity for their introduction.

At my first entrance on this undertaking, I did not extend my views beyond a volume of select Tragedies; but the farther I proceeded, the more dubious I found myself what to choose and what to reject: added to this motive, the

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disapprobation with which imperfect editions or versions of celebrated writers are frequently received by the Public, determined me, after making some small progress, to translate the whole: nor did the Fragments, consisting of more than two thousand five hundred lines, appear to me in the light of trivial gleanings, which I was at full liberty to retain or omit: their intrinsic merit is frequently very great, and so ample a collection, first formed and digested in Barnes's edition, but having received many subsequent improvements and augmentations from Heath, Valkenaer, and Dr. Musgrave, has indisputable claims to the attention of a Translator. A whole Volume of no inconsiderable size we find appropriated by Carmelli to the Fragments and Index: they have caused some addition to the bulk, but not to the number, of my three volumes: some few, which seemed ill calculated for rendering into English, I have omitted: as the Anagram consisting of those Greek letters which form the name of Theseus, together with here and there an imperfect sentence, or such as was nearly similar with what had already occurred.

It may not, however, be superfluous to premise, that among those invaluable remains of the Philosophic Bard, which abound with the noblest precepts of morality, the Reader will find some few sentences of an opposite tendency, supposed to be the language of men who were exhibited on the Athenian stage, not for the purpose of dis-

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seminating their blasphemous or immoral sentiments, but in order to strike offenders with terror by their signal punishment, as Bellerophon, Sisyphus, and Ixion: it is with great injustice therefore that Plutarch cites one of these detached passages, as shewing the irreligious disposition of Euripides.

I have retained the order of the nineteen Tragedies as I found it in almost every Editor and Translator down to Dr. Musgrave. Canterus has prefixed to his edition of Euripides, printed by Christopher Plantin, at Antwerp, in 1571, a list of pieces composed by the three Tragic writers of Greece, Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, arranged with a view to the order of time when the events on which they are founded took place. Brumoy has copied it; but neither the one nor the other has thought fit to bring it into practice: as far as relates to Euripides, the following is the order in which they are placed:

1. Ion.
2. Bacchanalians.
3. Medea.
4. Hippolytus.
5. Alcestis.
6. Hercules Distracted.
7. Phœnician Damsels.
8. Suppliants.
9. Iphigenia in Aulis.
10. Rhesus.
11. Trojan Captives.
12. Hecuba.
13. Cyclops.
14. Children of Hercules.
15. Electra.
16. Orestes.
17. Andromache.
18. Iphigenia in Tauris.
19. Helen.

In the above catalogue, various inaccuracies may with ease be pointed out. Mr. Jodrell has

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clearly shewn that the arrangement of the two first Tragedies ought to be inverted: the Medea, however, from the circumstances of its bearing date very soon after the Argonautic expedition, and being prior to the birth of Theseus, derives a title to the third place, which I cannot but look upon as satisfactory, though Mr. Potter gives precedence to the Alcestis; the Phœnician Damsels I would place fourth, and then its sequel the Suppliants, from which we collect that Theseus was at that time still a young man, but had performed some of his most memorable exploits; that Hero and Hercules having been comrades in arms, the arrangement of the pieces which relate to them is in some degree a matter of mere opinion; but if the Hippolytus stands sixth, and the Alcestis and Hercules Distracted follow, the transactions of each of those illustrious personages will be preserved in a more unbroken series. The reign of Acamas and Demophoon at Athens is not usually understood to have commenced till after the siege of Troy; but it appears from more than one passage in the writings of Euripides, that he entirely passes over the usurpation of Menestheus, and considers the two sons of Theseus as having ascended the throne immediately upon the death of their Father; and what most clearly proves that the Tragedy of the Children of Hercules could not be subsequent to the return of the Greeks from the siege of Troy, is Hyllus's being marked out as yet a stripling, and some of his Brothers and Sisters as in a state of absolute in-

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fancy: I must therefore place this, as Mr. Potter has done, before the five which precede it according to Canterus. In the ten plays which are founded either on the Trojan war, or the adventures of those Princes who there signalized themselves, and on those of their children, I have only one transposition to recommend, and that is bringing the Helen, which expressly precedes Menelaus's return to Greece, between the Cyclops and Electra, and ending with the Iphigenia in Tauris, which will thus stand at a very wide and aukward distance from the Iphigenia in Aulis, to which it is as evident a sequel as the Suppliants are to the Phœnician Damsels. After I had weighed the inconveniencies of either arrangement, the idea of any play being more easily referred to (if I left them in their former state) by those who are conversant with Euripides, was what preponderated: but such readers as prefer a chronological arrangement will meet with the best I am able to give them in the following list, with references to the volumes and pages, which will enable them with the greatest ease to make use of it in the perusal.

1. Bacchanalians	II,	347.
2. Ion	III,	89.
3. Medea	I,	247.
4. Phœnician Damsels	I,	157.
5. Suppliants	II,	1.
6. Hippolytus	I,	315.
7. Alcestis	I,	387.
8. Hercules Distracted	III,	177.
9. Children of Hercules	II,	451.
10. Iphigenia in Aulis	II,	65.

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11. Rhesus - - - - - - - - - - - - II, 239.
12. Trojan Captives - - - - - - - - II, 289.
13. Hecuba - - - - - - - - - - - - I, 1.
14. Cyclops - - - - - - - - - - - II, 411.
15. Helen - - - - - - - - - - - - III, 1.
16. Electra - - - - - - - - - - - III, 243.
17. Orestes - - - - - - - - - - - I, 59.
18. Andromache - - - - - - - - - I, 419.
19. Iphigenia in Tauris - - - - - - II, 157.

If I have not translated the arguments prefixed to each Tragedy, it is by no means owing to any wish to decline so small an addition to the task I had engaged in, but merely to my judging that the Prologues or introductory speeches, which are usually very clear and circumstantial, render such assistance less needful for the purpose of illustrating Euripides, than in any dramatic performances I ever recollect to have met with, whether antient or modern: which made me apprehend, that such double preludes, first in plain prose and then in verse, might be thought superfluous.

France, always accustomed to take the lead of other European nations, in the various departments of polite literature, produced very early translations of two Tragedies of Euripides. The Hecuba, by Lazarus de Baif, was printed by Robert Stephens in 1544 and again in 1550. Juvigny, in his edition of Croix de Maine, observes, that the verses are of all measures, and most of them very bad, but that there is a degree of simplicity in some parts, which makes us still read them with pleasure; and that the Iphigenia

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in Aulis by Thomas Sibillet, Paris 1549, abounds with quaintness, and is written in a style far from beautiful, though the translator is spoken of as a man of no inconsiderable learning and merit.

Previous to the years 1748 and 1749, when a translation of the Iphigenia in Tauris by Gilbert West, Esq. made its appearance, and another of the Hecuba by the Reverend Dr. Morell, I have never met with any Tragedy from Euripides in the English language, except the motley piece of the Jocasta by Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh: this I have had occasion to mention in my notes on the Phœnician Damsels, which is the foundation that served those two writers, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, for erecting a most incongruous superstructure; frequently have they deviated from the original for whole scenes together, and every where abound with the grossest barbarisms of language. Tanner, in his Bibliotheca Britannica, p. 488, mentions there being extant in manuscript, a translation of Iphigenia from Greek into English, by Joanna Lumley, Daughter to the Earl of Arundel.

At the time of advertising in the papers my intention of publishing this translation, which was in the month of February 1774, I thought that about one year would have been sufficient for finishing the work, and preparing my manuscript for the press; but, on a closer view, the

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task was found to be so much more arduous than I was apprehensive it would have proved, that notwithstanding about eight years have elapsed, during which I cannot charge myself with any gross degree of remissness or inattention, I feel much more inclined to express my fears, lest I should have been too hasty in the publication, than to apologise for my tardiness.

But on finding it was given out by some (especially since the appearance of an anonymous translation of four select Tragedies from Euripides in 1780, and a quarto volume, containing nine Tragedies, with which the Reverend Mr. Potter of Scarning in Norfolk, last summer, favoured his Subscribers) that I had totally abandoned this undertaking (than which nothing could be more distant from my thoughts), I apprehended, that similar expressions, and even whole lines, which will sometimes occur with little or no variation, where passages are literally translated from the same original, especially into blank verse, might give rise to a suspicion that I kept myself in reserve, merely to take undue advantages in availing myself of the labours of my competitors, if I waited till either of these Gentlemen had published the whole of his version before I committed mine to the press, of which it seemed eligible not to make separate publications. I therefore considered it as incumbent on me to exert redoubled diligence, in order to produce it as expeditiously as I could, con-

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sistently with an attention to those errors and inaccuracies which I was sensible demanded a revisal.

Of the notes, which I have already mentioned, I have little more to say, but that they are collected from a variety of editors and commentators, and will, I hope, many of them, be found explanatory of antient manners, and the history of the Fabulous and Heroic ages: the few of my own which I have hazarded, however defective in other respects, I can venture to speak of as written by an unconnected man, who is not disposed to step aside either to flatter the living, or insult the dead, and whose peculiar attention it has been to keep them clear from every the smallest allusion to any modern disputes either in politics or literature. If opinions relative to matters of criticism are there at any time maintained against those to whom it might seem that implicit deference is due from one so greatly their inferior, I trust it will be found, upon examination, that I am not contending for readings or interpretations of my own broaching, but such as have been received by those who are the more to be relied upon, because their fame has stood undiminished through a series of years.

Berkley-square,
April 24th, 1782.

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HECUBA.

Unam minimamque relinque,
De multis minimam posco, clamavit et unam. OVID.

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PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

POLYDORE'S GHOST.

HECUBA.

CHORUS OF CAPTIVE TROJAN DAMES.

POLYXENA.

ULYSSES.

FEMALE ATTENDANT OF HECUBA.

AGAMEMNON.

POLYMESTOR.

SCENE—THE THRACIAN CHERSONESUS.

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HECUBA.

THE GHOST OF POLYDORE.

LEAVING the cavern of the dead, and gates
Of darkness, where from all the Gods apart
Dwells Pluto, come I Polydore, the son
Of Hecuba from royal Cisseus sprung,
And Priam, who, when danger threaten'd Troy,
Fearing his city by the Grecian arms
Would be laid low in dust, from Phrygia's realm
In privacy convey'd me to the house
Of Polymestor, of his Thracian friend,
Who tills the Chersonesus' fruitful soil,
Ruling a nation fam'd for generous steeds;
But secretly, with me, abundant gold
My father sent, that his surviving children
Might lack no sustenance, if Ilion's walls
Should by the foe be levell'd with the ground.
I was the youngest of all Priam's sons,
By stealth he therefore sent me from the realm;
Nor could my feeble arm sustain the shield,
Or launch the javelin: but while yet entire
Each antient land-mark on our frontiers stood,
The turrets of the Phrygian state remain'd
Unshaken, and my brother Hector's spear
Prosper'd in battle; nurtur'd by the man
Of Thrace, my father's friend, I, wretched youth,
Grew like a vigorous scion. But when Troy,
When Hector fail'd, when my paternal dome
Was from its basis rent, and Priam's self,

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My aged father, at the altar bled
Which to the Gods his pious hands had rear'd,
Butcher'd by curst Achilles' ruthless son;
Me, his unhappy guest, my father's friend
Slew for the sake of gold, and having slain,
Plung'd me into the sea, that he might keep
Those treasures in his house. My breathless corse,
In various eddies by the rising waves
Of ocean tost, lies on the craggy shore,
Unwept, unburied. But by filial love
For Hecuba now prompted, I ascend
A disembodied ghost, and thrice have seen
The morning dawn, to Chersonesus land,
Since my unhappy mother came from Troy.
But all the Grecian army, in their ships,
Here anchoring on this coast of Thrace remain
Inactive; for appearing on his tomb
Achilles, Peleus' son, restrain'd the troops,
Who homeward else had steer'd their barks, and claims
Polyxena my sister, as a victim
Most precious at his sepulchre to bleed;
And her will he obtain, nor will his friends
Withold the gift; for fate this day decrees
That she shall die: my Mother must behold
Two of her slaughter'd children's corses, mine,
And this unhappy maid's — that in a tomb
I may be lodg'd, where the firm beach resists
The waves, I to her servant will appear,
Since from the powers of hell I have obtain'd
The privilege of honorable interment,
And that a mother's hand these rites perform:
I shall accomplish what my soul desir'd.
But on the aged Hecuba's approach,
Far hence must I retreat; for from the tent
Of Agamemnon she comes forth, alarm'd
By my pale spectre. O my wretched mother,
How art thou torn from princely roofs to view

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This hour of servitude! what sad reverse
Of fortune! some malignant God hath balanc'd
Thy present misery 'gainst thy former bliss. [*Exit.*

HECUBA, ATTENDED BY TROJAN DAMSELS.

HECUBA.

Forth from these doors, ye gentle virgins, lead me,
A weak old woman: O ye nymphs of Troy,
Support your fellow-servant, once your queen;
Bear me along, uphold my tottering frame,
And take me by this aged hand; your arm
Shall be my staff to lean on, while I strive
My tardy pace to quicken. O ye Lightnings
Of Jove, O Night in tenfold darkness wrapt,
By such terrific phantoms from my couch
Why am I scar'd? Thou venerable earth,
Parent of dreams that flit on raven wing;
The vision I abhor, which I in sleep
This night have seen, relating to my son,
Who here is foster'd in the Thracian realm,
And to Polyxena my dearest daughter:
For I too clearly saw and understood
The meaning of that dreadful apparition;
Ye tutelary Gods of this domain,
Preserve the only anchor of our house,
My son, who dwells in Thracian fields, o'erspread
With snow, protected by his father's friend.
Some fresh event awaits us, and ere long
By accents most unwelcome shall the ear
Of wretchedness be wounded: till this hour,
By such incessant horrors, such alarms,
My soul was never seiz'd. Where shall I view
The soul of Helenus, on whom the God
Bestow'd prophetic gifts, ye Phrygian maids?
Where my Cassandra to unfold the dream?
With bloody fangs I saw a wolf, who slew

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A dappled hind, which forcibly he tore
From these reluctant arms, and what encreas'd
My fears, was this; Achilles' spectre stalk'd
Upon the summit of his tomb, and claim'd
A gift, some miserable Trojan (1) captive.
You therefore I implore, ye Gods, avert
Such doom from my lov'd daughter,

CHORUS, HECUBA.

CHORUS.

I to thee,
To thee, O Hecuba, with breathless speed,
Fly from the tents of our imperious lords,
Where I by lot have been assign'd, and doom'd
To be a slave, driven by the pointed spear
From Troy; by their victorious arms the Greeks
Have made me captive: nothing can I bring,
Thy sorrows to alleviate; but to thee
Laden with heaviest tidings am I come
The herald of affliction. For 'tis said,

(1) From the most authentic account of human sacrifices at their first origin, they appear either to have consisted of virgins, or young men, in a state of celibacy. No less than four instances occur in the tragedies of Euripides, three of whom, Polyxena, Iphigenia, and Macaria, are virgins, and Menœceus is unwedded; the latter is expressly marked out by Tiresias as the only fit victim in Creon's family, an account of Hæmon his other son being affianced to Antigone. It may be necessary to premise thus much, as the name of Polyxena is not once mentioned in the account given by the Chorus, in the ensuing speech of the debate among the Grecian chiefs, among whom the question appears to have been, whether she (the only virgin of Priam's house) should be given as a victim to appease the Ghost of Achilles: she was naturally fixed upon, both on account of her royal birth, and having been betrothed to him; nor do they seem to have had any intentions, (as Brumoy too hastily asserts) of sacrificing Cassandra, the concubine of Agamemnon, whose attachment to that princess is incidentally mentioned as the cause of his interesting himself in behalf of her mother, and wishing to save her sister Polyxena, whom the Ghost of Achilles had demanded as a victim.

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Greece in full council hath resolv'd thy daughter
A victim to Achilles shall be given.
The warrior mounting on his tomb, thou know'st,
Appear'd in golden armour, and restrained
The fleet just ready to unfurl its sails,
Exclaiming, "Whither would ye steer your course,
"Ye Greeks, and leave no offering on my grave?"
A storm of violent contention rose,
And two opinions in the martial synod
Of Greece went forth; the victim, some maintain'd,
Ought on the sepulchre to bleed, and some
Such offering disapprov'd. But Agamemnon,
Who shares the bed of the Prophetic Dame,
Espous'd thy interest; while the (2) sons of Theseus,

(2) Acamas and Demophoon. When the affairs of Theseus became desperate, and he no longer found himself able to maintain his authority at Athens against the friends of Menestheus, he privately sent his two sons to Eubœa, from whence, Plutarch asserts, they followed the banners of Elphenor, as private men, to the siege of Troy; which accounts for Homer's making no mention of them in his Catalogue of the Grecian Fleet: but in Tryphydorus and Quintus Calaber, we find the names of them both among the warriors who were enclos'd in the Wooden Horse. Menestheus commanded the Athenian troops during the Trojan war, and died in his return in the isle of Melos; upon which Acamas and Demophoon became joint kings of Athens. But according to Euripides, they were in possession of that throne, at the time when Alcmena, the widow of Hercules, fled thither with her children to sue for protection from the Athenians against Eurystheus, which must have been previous to the Trojan war. In the account of the Grecian Fleet, at the time of its rendezvous at Aulis, in the Iphigenia of Euripides, which differs considerably from Homer's, the Athenian squadron is said to have been commanded by "the son of Theseus," whom the poet does not name; but, as Barnes observes in his note, either Acamas or Demophoon must be the person there meant: these two passages, however, of Homer and Euripides, seem to have led the gentlemen, who republished Robert Stephens's Latin Thesaurus, with very considerable additions, at London, in 1734, into a most gross and palpable error; under the article Menestheus, they call him the son of Theseus and Phædra, though it is well known he was the son of Petæus; and it appears from Plutarch's Life of Theseus, which I have already cited, that he did not obtain the Athenian sceptre by right of inheritance, but by forcibly wresting it from that monarch: Gesner,

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Branches from the Athenian root, discuss'd
The question largely in each point of view,
But in the same opinion both concurr'd,
And said that never should Cassandra's love
To great Achilles' valor be preferr'd:
Equally balanc'd the debate still hung,
When he, that crafty orator, endued
With sweetest voice, the favorite of the crowd,
Laertes' son, persuaded all the host,
Not to reject the first of Grecian chiefs,
And yield the preference to a victim slave:
Lest some vindictive ghost, before the throne
Of Proserpine arising, might relate
How Greece unmindful of her generous sons,
Who nobly perish'd for their native land,
From Ilion's fields departed. In a moment
Ulysses will come hither, from thy breast,
And aged arms to drag the tender maid.
But to the temples, to the altars, go,
In suppliant posture clasp Atrides' knees,
Invoke the Gods of heaven and hell beneath,
For either thou wilt by thy prayers avert
Thy daughter's fate, else must thou at the tomb
Behold the virgin fall distain'd with gore,
And gushing from her neck a crimson stream.

HECUBA.

Wretch that I am! ah me! what clamorous sounds,
What words, what plaints, what dirges shall I find,
Expressive of the anguish which I feel?
Opprest by miserable old age, bow'd down
Under a load of servitude too heavy.
To be endur'd: what sanctuary remains,

in his Thes. Lat. Lipsic, 1749, not only retains this mistake, but exaggerates it, by calling Menestheus the brother of Demophoon. In translating Δισσων μυθων ρῆσις ἠτον· γνωμη δε μια συνεχωρεστην, I have followed the interpretation of Heusler, who has illustrated this single play with an elaborate comment of 291 leaves, printed at Lipsic in 1554.

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What valiant race, what city will protect me?
The hoary Priam is no more, my sons
Are now no more. Or to this path, or that,
Shall I direct my steps? or whither go?
Where shall I find some tutelary God?
Ye Phrygian captives, messengers of ill,
O ye who with unwelcome tidings fraught,
Come hither, ye have ruin'd me. The orb
Of day shall never rise to fill this breast
With any comfort more. Ye luckless feet,
Bear an infirm old woman to the tent
Of our captivity. Come forth, my daughter,
Come forth and listen to thy mother's voice,
That thou may'st know the rumor I have heard,
In which thy life is interested.

POLYXENA, HECUBA, CHORUS.

POLYXENA.

O mother,
What mean you by those shrieks? what fresh event
Proclaiming, from my chamber, like a bird,
Have you constrain'd me, urg'd by fear, to speed
My flight?

HECUBA.

Ah, daughter!

POLYXENA.

With foreboding voice,
Why do you call me? these are evil omens.

HECUBA.

Alas! thy life, Polyxena.

POLYXENA.

Speak out,
Nor aggravate the horrors yet untold
By long suspence. I fear, O mother, much
I fear. What mean those oft repeated groans?

HECUBA.

Thou child of a most miserable mother!

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POLYXENA.

Why speak you thus?

HECUBA.

The Greeks, with one consent,
Resolve that on the tomb of Peleus' son
Thou shalt be sacrific'd.

POLYXENA

What boundless woes
Are these which to your daughter you announce!
Yet, O my mother, with the tale proceed.

HECUBA.

Of a most horrible report I speak,
Which says, that, by the suffrage of the Greeks,
It is resolv'd to take away thy life.

POLYXENA.

O, my unhappy mother, doom'd to suffer
Wrongs the most dreadful, doom'd to lead a life
Of utter wretchedness: what grievous curse,
Such as no language can express, on you
Hath some malignant Demon hurl'd! no more
Can I, your daughter, share the galling yoke
Of servitude with your forlorn old age;
For like some lion's whelp, or heifer bred
Upon the mountains, hurried from your arms
Shall you behold me, and with sever'd head
Consign'd to Pluto's subterraneous realms
Of darkness, there among the silent dead,
Wretch that I am, shall I be laid. These tears
Of bitter lamentation I for you,
For you, O mother, shed; but my own life
I heed not, nor the shame, nor fatal stroke,
For I in death a happier lot obtain.

CHORUS.

To thee, O Hecuba, with hasty step
Behold Ulysses some new message brings.

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ULYSSES, HECUBA, POLYXENA, CHORUS.

ULYSSES.

Tho' I presume the counsels of our troops
And their decision are already known
To thee, O woman, yet must I repeat
Th' unwelcome tidings; at Achilles' tomb,
Polyxena, thy daughter, have the Greeks
Resolv'd to slay; me to attend the virgin
Have they commanded; but Achilles' son
Is at the altar destin'd to preside,
And be the priest. Know'st thou thy duty then?
Constrain us not to drag her from those arms
With violence, nor strive with me; but learn
The force of thy inevitable woes:
For there is wisdom, e'en when we are wretched,
In following reason's dictates,

HECUBA.

Now, alas!
It seems a dreadful struggle is at hand,
With groans abounding and unnumber'd tears.
I died not at the time I ought to die,
Neither did Jove destroy me; he still spares
My life, that I may view fresh woes, yet greater,
Wretch that I am, than all my former woes.
But if a slave, who not with bitter taunt,
Or keen reproach, her questions doth propose,
Might speak to freemen, now 'tis time for you
To cease, and give me audience while I ask—

ULYSSES.

Allow'd, proceed; for I without reluctance
Will grant thee time.

HECUBA.

Remember you when erst
You came to Troy a spy, in tatter'd garb
Disguis'd, and from your eyes upon your beard,
Fell tears extorted by the dread of death?

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ULYSSES.

I well remember: for by that event
My inmost heart was touch'd.

HECUBA.

But (3) Helen knew you,
And told me only.

ULYSSES.

I can ne'er forget
Into what danger I was fallen.

HECUBA.

My knees
You in a lowly posture did embrace

ULYSSES.

And to thy garment clung with faltering hand.

HECUBA.

At length I sav'd, and from our land dismiss'd you.

ULYSSES.

Hence I the solar beams yet view.

HECUBA.

What language
Did you then hold, when subject to my power?

ULYSSES.

Full many were the words which I devis'd
To save my life.

HECUBA.

Doth not your guilt appear
From your own counsels? Though your tongue avows
The generous treatment you from me receiv'd
No benefit on me do you confer,
But strive to harm me. O ungrateful race
Of men, who aim at popular applause
By your smooth speeches; would to heav'n I ne'er
Had known you, for ye heed not how ye wound
Your friends, whene'er ye can say aught to win
The crowd. But what pretence could they devise

(3) See Homer, Odyss. l. iv. ver. 242—258.

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For sentencing this virgin to be slain?
Are they constrain'd by fate, with human victims,
To drench the tomb on which they rather ought
To sacrifice the steer? or doth Achilles
Demand her life with justice, to retaliate
Slaughter on them who slaughter'd? But to him
Hath she done nought injurious. He should claim
Helen as victim at his tomb, for she
His ruin caus'd by leading him to Troy.
If it was needful that some chosen captive
Distinguish'd by transcendent charms should die,
We were not meant; for the perfidious daughter
Of Tyndarus is most beauteous, and her crimes
To ours at least are equal. Justice only
In this debate supports me: hear how large
The debt which 'tis your duty to repay
On my petition: you confess you touch'd
My hand, and these my aged cheeks, in dust
Groveling a suppliant; yours I now embrace,
From you the kindness which I erst bestow'd
Again implore, and sue to you: O tear not
My daughter from these arms, nor slay the maid:
Sufficient is the number of the slain.
In her I yet rejoice, in her forget
My woes; she, for the loss of many children,
Consoles me, I in her a country find,
A nurse, a staff, a guide. The mighty ought not
To issue lawless mandates, nor should they,
On whom propitious fortunes now attend,
Think that their triumphs will for ever last:
For I was happy once, but am no more,
My bliss all vanish'd in a single day.
Yet, O my friend, revere and pity me,
Go to the Grecian host, admonish them
How horrible an action 'twere to slay
These captive women whom at first ye spar'd,
And pitied when ye dragg'd them from the altars.

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For by your laws 'tis equally forbidden
To spill the blood of freeman, or of slave.
Altho' you weakly argue, will your rank
Convince them: for the self-same speech, when utter'd
By the ignoble, and men well esteem'd,
Comes not with equal force.

CHORUS.

The human soul
Is not so flinty as to hear the woes
And plaintive strains thou lengthen'st out, nor shed
The sympathising tear.

ULYSSES.

To me attend,
O Hecuba, nor thro' resentment deem
That from a foe such counsels can proceed:
I am dispos'd to save thee, and now hold
No other language: but will not deny
What I to all have said; since Troy is taken,
On the first warrior of the host who asks
A victim, should thy daughter be bestow'd.
The cause why many cities are diseas'd
Is this: the brave and generous man obtains
No honorable distinction to exalt him
Above the coward. But from us, O woman,
Achilles claims such homage, who for Greece
Died nobly. Is not this a foul reproach,
If, while our friends yet live, we seek their aid,
But after death ungratefully forget
Past services? Should armed bands once more
Assemble, and renew the bloody strife,
Will not some hardy veteran thus exclaim;
"Shall we go forth to battle, or indulge
"The love of life, now we have seen the dead
"Obtain no honors?" While from day to day
I live, though I have little, yet that little
For every needful purpose will suffice.

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But may conspicuous trophies o'er my grave
Be planted, for such tribute to my name
Will last to after-ages. If thou call
Thy sufferings piteous, hear what in reply
We have to urge; amidst the Grecian camp
Are many aged dames, as miserable
As thou art, with full many a hoary sire,
And weeping bride, torn from her valiant lord,
O'er whose remains hath Ida's dust been strewn.
Support thy woes: if with mistaken zeal
We have resolv'd to honor the deceas'd,
Our crime is ignorance: but ye Barbarians
Pay no distinction to your friends, no homage
To the illustrious dead; hence Greece prevails;
But ye from your pernicious counsels reap
The bitter fruits they merit.

CHORUS.

Ah, what ills
Ever attend the captive state, subdued
By brutal violence, and forc'd t' endure
Unseemly wrongs.

HECUBA.

Those words I vainly spoke
Thy slaughter to avert, in air were lavish'd:
But, O my daughter, if thy power exceed
Thy mother's, like the nightingale send forth
Each warbled note, to save thy life, excite,
By falling at his knees, Ulysses' pity,
And on this ground, because he too hath children,
Entreat him to compassionate thy doom.

POLYXENA.

I see thee, O Ulysses, thy right hand
Beneath thy robe concealing, see thee turn
Thy face away, lest I should touch thy beard.
Be of good cheer; I'll not call down the wrath
Of Jove who guards the suppliant, but will follow

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Thy steps, because necessity ordains
And 'tis my wish to die; if I were loth,
I should appear to be an abject woman,
And fond of life: but what could lengthen'd life
Avail to me, whose father erst was lord
Of the whole Phrygian realm? Thus first I drew
My breath beneath the roofs of regal domes;
Then was I nurtur'd with the flattering hope
That I should wed a monarch, and arrive
At the proud mansion of some happy youth.
Ill-fated princess, thus I stood conspicuous
Amid the dames and brightest nymphs of Troy,
In all but immortality a Goddess;
But now am I a slave, and the first cause
Which makes me wish to die, is that abhorr'd
Unwonted name; else some inhuman lord
With gold perchance might purchase me, the sister
Of Hector, and full many a valiant chief,
Might make me knead the bread, and sweep the floor,
And ply the loom, and pass my abject days
In bitterness of woe: some servile mate
Might bring dishonor to my bed, tho' erst
I was deem'd worthy of a scepter'd king:
Not thus. These eyes shall to the last behold
The light of freedom. O ye shades receive
A princess. Lead me on then, O Ulysses,
And as thou lead'st dispatch me, for no hope,
No ground for thinking, I shall e'er be happy,
Can I discern: yet hinder not by word
Or deed the stedfast purpose I have form'd;
But, O my mother, in this wish concur
With me, that I may die ere I endure
Such wrongs as suit not my exalted rank.
For whosoe'er hath not been us'd to taste
Of sorrow, bears indeed the galling yoke,
Yet is he griev'd, when he to such constraint
Submits his neck: but they who die may find

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A bliss beyond the living; for to live
Ignobly were the utmost pitch of shame.

CHORUS.

A great distinction, and among mankind
The most conspicuous, is to spring from sires
Renown'd for virtue; generous souls hence raise
To heights sublimer an ennobled name.

HECUBA.

Thou, O my daughter, well indeed hast spoken;
Yet these exalted sentiments of thine
To me will cause fresh grief: but, if the son
Of Peleus must be gratified, and Greece
Avoid reproach, Ulysses, slay not her,
But me, conducting to Achilles' tomb,
Transpierce with unrelenting hand. I bore
Paris, whose shafts the son of Thetis slew.

ULYSSES.

Not thee for victim, O thou aged dame,
But her, Achilles' spectre hath demanded.

HECUBA.

Yet slay me with my daughter; so shall Earth,
And the Deceas'd who claims these hateful rites,
A twofold portion drink of human gore.

ULYSSES.

Enough in her of victims; let no more
Be added: would to heaven we were not bound
To offer up this one!

HECUBA.

The dread behests
Of absolute necessity require,
That with my daughter I should die.

ULYSSES.

What mean'st thou?
I know no Lord to counteract my will.

HECUBA.

Her, as the ivy clings around the oak,
Will I embrace.

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ULYSSES.

Not if to wiser counsels
Thou yield just deference.

HECUBA.

I will ne'er consent
My daughter to release.

ULYSSES.

Nor will I go,
And leave her here.

POLYXENA.

Attend to me, my mother.
And, O thou offspring of Laertes, treat
The just emotions of parental wrath
With greater mildness. But, O hapless woman,
Contend not with our conquerors. Would you fall
Upon the earth and wound your aged limbs,
Thrust from me forcibly, by youthful arms
Torn with disgrace away? Provoke not wrongs
Unseemly; O, my dearest mother, give
That much-lov'd hand, and let me join my cheek
To yours; for I no longer shall behold
The radiant orb of yonder Sun. Now take
A last farewell, O you who gave me birth;
I to the shades descend.

HECUBA.

But I the light
Am doom'd to view, and still remain a slave.

POLYXENA.

Unwedded, reft of promis'd bridal joys.

HECUBA,

Thou, O my daughter, claim'st the pitying tear:
But I am a most miserable woman.

POLYXENA.

There shall I sleep among the realms beneath,
From you secluded.

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HECUBA.

What resource, alas!
For me, the wretched Hecuba is left?
Where shall I finish this detested life?

POLYXENA.

Born free, I die a slave.

HECUBA.

I too, bereft
Of (4) all my children.

POLYXENA.

What commands to Hector,
Or to your aged Husband, shall I bear?

HECUBA.

Tell them I of all women am most wretched.

POLYXENA.

Ye paps which sweetly nourish'd me —

HECUBA.

Alas!
My child's untimely miserable fate.

POLYXENA.

Farewell, my mother, and my dear Cassandra.

HECUBA.

To others in that language speak; be theirs
The happiness thy mother cannot taste.

POLYXENA.

And thou, my brother Polydore, who dwell'st
Among the Thracians, fam'd for generous steeds —

HECUBA.

If yet he live; but this I greatly doubt,
Because I am in all respects so wretched.

(4) In the original it is Πεντηκοντ' Ἄκοιτιν, of my *fifty* children; but the Scholiast observes, that the spurious children of Priam are here added by Hecuba to her own, who were nineteen in number, to increase the pathos. Priam's whole family, according to Homer, in the sixth book of the Iliad, consisted of fifty sons and twelve daughters, in all sixty-two children.

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POLYXENA.

He lives, and when the hour of death is come,
Will close your eyes.

HECUBA.

I'm prematurely dead
While yet alive, bow'd down to earth by woe.

POLYXENA.

Now bear me hence, Ulysses, o'er my face
Casting a veil: for ere I at the altar
Am slain, this heart is melted by the plaints
Of my dear Mother, and my tears augment
Her sorrows. O thou radiant Light; for still
Am I permitted to invoke thy name,
But can enjoy thee only till I meet
The lifted sword, and reach Achilles' tomb.

Exeunt ULYSSES *and* POLYXENA.

HECUBA.

I faint, my limbs are all unnerv'd; return,
My daughter, let me touch that hand once more,
Leave me not childless. O, my friends, I perish;
Ah would to Heaven I could see Spartan Helen,
In the same state, that Sister to the Sons
Of Jove, for by her beauteous eyes, was Troy,
That prosperous city, with disgrace o'erthrown.

CHORUS.

O D E.

I. 1.

Ye breezes, who the ships convey,
That long becalm'd at anchor lay,
Nor dar'd to quit the strand;
As the swift keel divides the wave,
Say whither am I borne a slave,
Ordain'd to tread the Doric land,
Or Phthia, where beset with reeds,
Apidanus, the Sire of limpid rills,
Winding a-down the channell'd hills,
Waters the fruitful meads?

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I. 2.

Or to that Isle, with dashing oar
Impell'd, shall I my woes deplore,
And on the sacred earth,
Where first the palm and laurel rose,
Memorials of Latona's throes,
Which to the Twins Divine gave birth,
Teach the harmonious strain to flow;
With Delos' nymphs Diana's praise resound,
Her hair with golden fillet bound,
And never-erring bow?

II. 1.

Or, pent in some Athenian tower,
Devoted to Minerva's power,
On the robe's tissued ground
While, shadow'd by my needle, spread
Expressive forms, in vivid thread,
Picture the Goddess whirling round
Her chariot with unrivall'd speed;
Or represent the Titan's impious crew,
Whom Jove's red lightnings overthrew,
Those monsters doom'd to bleed?

II. 2.

Alas! my sons, a valiant band,
My fathers, and my native land,
Ye shar'd the general fate.
Sack'd by the Greeks, Troy's bulwarks smoke,
But I, constrain'd to bear the yoke,
Shall soon behold some foreign state,
To ignominious bondage led;
And leaving vanquish'd Asia Europe's slave,
Debarr'd an honourable (5) grave,
Ascend the victor's bed.

(5) Carmelli, the Italian translator of Euripides, in one of his Latin notes, interprets αλλαξας αυδα Σαλαμις, pro regiis patriisque thalamis seu domibus tristia loca sortita: the more diffuse paraphrase of Heusler con-

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TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

TALTHYBIUS.

Where, O ye Phrygian damsels, shall I find
The wretched Hecuba, who erst was Queen
Of Ilion?

CHORUS.

Prostrate near you on the ground,
Wrapt in her mantle, there she lies.

veys much the same meaning; but the word αὐὴ seems to require a more literal version; and Erasmus renders it, mutans morte faces thalami, which by no means accords with the sentiments expressed, in the preceding part of this ode, by the Trojan captives, who form the chorus; for, instead of entertaining any apprehensions of being put to death, they have given a detail of the occupations in which they expected to be engaged after landing in Greece. King has given what appears to me the clearest and best interpretation of these words, in those of redimens me morte toro; and Henry Stephens, in his Greek Thesaurus, mentions this passage as an instance of the verb ἀλλαττὴν used ἀπὸ τροπῆς, and proposes to read αὐδὲ θαλαμους; as does Dr. Musgrave αὐδὰ, in the genitive case. But the expression, as it now stands in the printed editions, seems to be exactly a similar mode of speaking in the Greek, with Horace's cur valle permutem Sabinâ divitias operosiores, in the Latin. The idea here meant to be conveyed is, I doubt not, the same with that which is more amply expressed by Andromache in Virgil:

O felix una ante alias Priameia virgo
Hostilem ad tumulum Trojæ sub mœnibus altis
Jussa mori, quæ sortitus non pertulit ullos,
Nec victoris heri tetigit captiva cubile.

Oh only happy maid of Priam's race,
Whom death deliver'd from the foe's embrace!
Commanded on Achilles' tomb to die,
Not forc'd like us to hard captivity,
Or in a haughty master's arms to lie. DRYDEN.

The edition of this play by Henry Stephens, in his Trag. Select. differs from all others I have seen, by putting this second Antistrophe into the mouth of Hecuba, and a marginal note written, with a pencil by the late Rev. Cæsar De Missy, in the copy of King's Euripides now in my possession, mentions this stanza being also ascribed to Hecuba in a manuscript, containing, I think, the three first Tragedies of Euripides, which, at the sale of his books, was purchased by the British Museum. But the very next lines shew Hecuba stretched on the ground, and reduced by her griefs to a state of stupefaction.

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TALTHYBIUS.

Great Jove!
What shall I say? that thou from Heaven look'st down
Upon mankind, or have they rashly form'd
A vain opinion, deeming that the race
Of Gods exist, tho' Fortune governs all?
Ha! was not this the Queen of wealthy Phrygia,
And was not she the happy Priam's wife?
But her whole city by the hostile spear
Is now destroy'd, while she a slave, bow'd down
By age, and childless, stretcht upon the ground,
Defiles with dust her miserable head,
Old as I am, yet gladly would I die
Rather than sink into abhorr'd disgrace,
Arise, unhappy woman, O lift up
That feeble body, and that hoary head,

HECUBA.

Away! O suffer this decrepid frame
To rest. Why move me? Whosoe'er thou art,
What mean'st thou? why dost thou molest th' afflicted?

TALTHYBIUS.

Talthybius: me, the Herald of the Greeks,
O woman, Agamemnon hath dispatch'd
To fetch you.

HECUBA.

Com'st thou, by the Greeks ordain'd,
My friend, to slay me also at the tomb?
How welcome were such tidings; let us go,
With speed conduct me thither.

TALTHYBIUS.

To inter
Your daughter, I invite you; both the sons
Of Atreus, and the assembled Grecian host,
Have sent me for that purpose.

HECUBA.

Ah! what say'st thou?
Thou com'st not to inform me I must die,

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But to unfold the most disastrous tidings.
Then art thou lost, my daughter, from the arms
Of thy fond mother torn; of thee, my child
Am I bereft. But how did ye destroy her,
Respectfully, or with the ruthless hand
Of hostile rage? Speak, tho' it wound my soul.

TALTHYBIUS.

A second time, in pity to your daughter,
You make me weep; for now while I relate
Her sufferings, tears bedew these swimming eyes,
Such as I shed when at the tomb she perish'd.
To view the sacrifice the Grecian host
Were all assembled: taking by the hand
Polyxena, on the sepulcral hilloc
Achilles' son then plac'd her: I drew near,
Attended by the chosen youths of Greece,
To hold the tender victim, and prevent
Her struggles: But Achilles's son, uplifting
With both his hands a cup of massive gold,
Pour'd forth libations to his breathless Sire;
And gave a sign to me, thro' the whole camp
Strict silence to proclaim. I in the midst
Stood up and cried; "Be mute, ye Greeks, let none
"Presume to speak, observe a general silence."
The troops obey'd, and thro' their crowded ranks
Not e'en a breath was heard, while in these words
The Chief express'd his purpose; "Son of Peleus,
"My father, the propitiatory drops
"Of these libations which invite the dead
"Accept; O come and quaff the crimson blood
"Of this pure virgin, whom to thee all Greece
"And I devote; be thou benign, O grant us
"Securely to weigh anchor, to unbind
"Our halsers, and on all of us bestow
"A happy voyage to our native land
"From vanquish'd Troy." He ceas'd, and in his prayer

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Join'd the whole army, when the Chief unsheath'd
His golden-hilted sword, and gave a sign
To chosen youths of Greece to hold the Virgin,
Which she perceiv'd, and in these words address'd
The warriors; " O ye Argives, who laid waste
" My city, willingly I die, let no man
" Confine these arms, I with undaunted breast
" Will meet the stroke. I by the Gods conjure you
" Release, and slay me as my rank demands
" Like one born free; for I from mighty kings
" Descend, and in the shades beneath should blush
" To be accounted an ignoble slave."
Thro' all the host ran murmurs of assent,
And royal Agamemnon bade the youths
Release the Virgin; they their monarch's voice,
Soon as they heard, obey'd; our Lord's behests
The Princess too revering, from her shoulder
Down to her waist rent off the purple robe,
Display'd her bosom like some statue form'd
In exquisite proportion, and to earth
Bending her knee, in these affecting words
Express'd herself; " If at my breast thou aim
" The wound, strike here; if at my neck, that neck
" Is ready bar'd." Half willing, and half loth,
Thro' pity for the maid, he with keen steel
Sever'd the arteries; streams of blood gush'd forth:
Yet even thus, tho' at her latest gasp,
She shew'd a strong solicitude to fall
With decency, while stood the gazing host
Around her: soon as thro' the ghastly wound
Her soul had issued, every Greek was busied
In various labors; o'er the corse some strew'd
The verdant foliage, others rear'd a pyre
With trunks of fir: but he who nothing brought,
From him who with funereal ornament
Was laden, heard these taunts; " O slothful wretch,
" Bear'st thou no robe, no garland, hast thou nought

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"To give in honor of this generous Maid?"
Such their encomiums on thy breathless daughter.
You, of all women, who in such a child
Were happiest, now most wretched I behold.

CHORUS.

Fate, the behests of the immortal Gods
Accomplishing, with tenfold weight hath caus'd
This dreadful curse to fall on Priam's house,
And on our city.

HECUBA.

Midst unnumber'd ills
I know not, O my daughter, whither first
To turn my eyes, for if on one I touch,
Another hinders me, and I again,
By a long train of woes succeeding woes,
To some fresh object am from thence call'd off;
Nor can I from my tortur'd soul efface
The grief thy fate occasions; yet the tale
Of thy exalted courage checks my groans,
Which else had been immoderate. No just cause
Have we for wonder, if the barren land
Chear'd by Heaven's influence with benignant suns
Yields plenteous harvests, while a richer soil
Depriv'd of every necessary aid
Bears weeds alone. But midst the human race
The wicked man is uniformly wicked,
The good still virtuous, nor doth evil fortune
Corrupt his soul; the same unsullied worth
He still retains. Is this great difference owing
To birth, or education? We are taught
What virtue is, by being nurtur'd well,
And he who thoroughly hath learnt this lesson,
Guided by the unerring rule of right,
Can thence discern what's base.—My soul in vain
Hath hazarded these incoherent thoughts.
But, O Talthybius, to the Greeks repair,
And strict injunctions give, that no man touch

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My daughter's corse, but let the gazing crowd
Be driven away. For in a numerous host
Its multitudes break loose from all restraints,
The outrages of mariners exceed
Devouring flame, and whoso'er abstains
From mischief, by his comrades is despis'd.
But, O my aged servant, take and dip
That urn in ocean's waves, and hither bring,
Fill'd with its water, that the last sad rites
To my departed daughter I may pay,
And lave the corse of that unwedded bride,
Of that affianc'd virgin: but alas!
Whence with such costly gifts as she deserves,
Her tomb can I adorn? My present state
Affords them not, but what it doth afford
Will I bestow, and from the captive dames
Appointed to attend me, who reside
Within these tents, some ornaments collect,
If, unobserv'd by their new masters, aught
They have secreted. O ye splendid domes,
Ye palaces once happy, which contain'd
All that was rich and fair; O Priam thou
The sire, and I who was the aged mother
Of an illustrious race, how are we dwindled
To nothing, stripp'd of all our antient pride!
Yet do we glory, some in mansions stor'd
With gold abundant, others when distinguish'd
Among the citizens by sounding titles.
Vain are the schemes which with incessant care
We frame, and all our boastful words are vain.
The happiest man is he who, by no ill
O'ertaken, passes thro' life's fleeting day.

Exit HECUBA.

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CHORUS.

O D E.

I.

(6) By Heaven was my devoted head
Menac'd with impending ill,
What time the pines, whose branches spread
Their tutelary shade o'er Ida's hill,
Were laid by Phrygian Paris low,
That his adventurous bark might stem the tide,
From Sparta's coast to waft the fairest bride
On whom the solar beams their golden radiance throw.

II.

Surrounding labors were at hand
Leagu'd with the behests of fate;
Then did such madness seize the land,
As call'd down vengeance from a foreign state.
The royal Swain with dazzled eyes
Gave that decree, the source of all our woes,
When from three rival Goddesses he chose
Bright Venus, and pronounc'd that she deserv'd the prize.

III.

The spear and death hence rag'd around,
Hence were my mansions levell'd with the ground;
Staining with tears Eurotas' tide,
Too deeply griev'd to share the victor's pride,
The Spartan virgin too in vain
Bewails her favour'd youth untimely slain,

(6) The earliest Latin translations I have seen from Euripides are this Tragedy, by G. Anselm, published singly in 4to, at Parma, in June 1506, and Hecuba, with Iphigenia in Aulis, by Erasmus, printed in small folio, at Paris, in September 1506; the stanzas now before us, which the Poet puts into the mouth of the Chorus, are translated, with some additions, by Marinus, and thrown into twelve stanzas of Saphic metre, which he entitles "Hecubæ Captivæ querela," and inserts in his Hymns, p. 166, Paris, 1537: Buchanan has transplanted much from hence and the Iphigenia in Aulis, into his Jephthes.

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While, sprinkling ashes o'er their vest
And hoary head, the matrons bend
O'er their sons' urns; their groans to Heaven ascend,
They tear their cheeks, and beat their miserable breast.

ATTENDANT, CHORUS.

ATTENDANT.

Where is the wretched Hecuba, my friends,
Who in her woes surpasses all, or male,
Or of the female race? her none can rob
Of her just claim, pre-eminence in grief.

CHORUS.

With the harsh sounds of that ill-boding tongue,
O wretch, what mean'st thou? wilt thou never cea
To be th' unwelcome herald of affliction?

ATTENDANT.

Most grievous are the tidings which I bring
To Hecuba, nor easy were the task
In words auspicious to make known to mortals
Such dire calamities.

CHORUS.

From her apartment
She seasonably comes forth to give thee audience.

HECUBA, ATTENDANT, CHORUS.

ATTENDANT.

O most unfortunate, whose woes exceed
All that the power of language can express,
My Queen, you perish, doom'd no more to view
The blessed light; of children, husband, city,
Bereft and ruin'd.

HECUBA.

Nothing hast thou told
But what I knew, thou only com'st t'insult me:
Yet wherefore dost thou bring to me this corse
Of my Polyxena, o'er whom 'twas said

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The Grecian host with pious zeal all vied
To heap a tomb?

ATTENDANT.

She knows not, but laments
For the deceas'd Polyxena alone,
And to her recent woes is yet a stranger.

HECUBA.

Ah, bring'st thou the inspir'd prophetic head,
And the dishevel'd tresses of Cassandra?

ATTENDANT.

You speak of one yet living, but bewail not
This the deceas'd: survey the naked corse
Of him whose death to you will seem most strange
And most unlook'd for.

HECUBA.

Ha, I see my son,
My dearest Polydore, whom he of Thrace
Beneath his roof protected. I am ruin'd;
Now utterly I perish. O my son,
For thee, for thee I wake the frantic dirge,
By that malignant Demon which assum'd
Thy voice, thy semblance, recently appriz'd
Of this calamity.

ATTENDANT.

O wretched mother,
Know you then what was your son's fate?

HECUBA.

A sight
Incredible and new to me is that
Which I behold: for from my former woes
Spring woes in long succession, and the day
When I shall cease to weep, shall cease to groan,
Will never come.

CHORUS.

The woes which we endure
Alas! are dreadful.

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HECUBA.

O my son, thou son
Of an ill fated mother, by what death
Didst thou expire? thro' what disastrous cause
Here liest thou prostrate? ah, what bloody hand—?

ATTENDANT.

I know not: on the shore his corse I found.

HECUBA.

Cast up by the impetuous waves, or pierced
With murderous spear?

ATTENDANT.

The surges of the deep
Had thrown it on the sand.

HECUBA.

Alas! too well
I comprehend the meaning of the dream
Which to these eyes appear'd: the spectre borne
On sable pinions no illusion prov'd,
When, O my son, thee, thee it represented
No longer dwelling in the realms of light.

CHORUS.

Instructed by that vision, canst thou name
The murderer?

HECUBA.

'Twas my friend, the Thracian King,
With whom in secresy his aged Sire
Had plac'd him.

CHORUS.

Ha! what mean'st thou? to possess
That gold by slaying him?

HECUBA.

O, 'twas a deed
Unutterable, a deed without a name,
Surpassing all astonishment, unholy,
And not to be endur'd. Where now the laws
Of hospitality? Accursed man,

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How cruelly hast thou with reeking sword
Transpierc'd this unresisting boy, nor heard
The gentle voice of pity!

CHORUS.

Hapless Queen,
How hath some Demon, thy malignant foe,
Render'd thee of all mortals the most wretched:
But I behold great Agamemnon come,
And therefore, O my friends, let us be silent.

AGAMEMNON, HECUBA, CHORUS.

AGAMEMNON.

Whence this delay? why go you not t' inter,
O Hecuba, your daughter, whom Talthybius
Directed that no Greek might be allow'd
To touch? We therefore have with your request
Complied, nor mov'd the corse. But you remain
Inactive, which I wonder at, and come
To fetch you, for each previous solemn rite
That best might please, if aught such rites can please,
Have we perform'd. But ha, what Trojan youth
Do I behold lie breathless in the tent?
For that he was no Greek, the garb informs me
In which he's clad.

HECUBA.

Thou wretch, for of myself
I speak, when thee, O Hecuba, I name;
What shall I do, at Agamemnon's knees
Fall prostrate, or in silence bear my woes?

AGAMEMNON.

Why weep, with face averted, yet refuse
T' inform me what hath happen'd? who is he?

HECUBA.

But from his knees, if, deeming me a slave
And enemy, the Monarch should repell me,
This would but make my sorrows yet more poignant.

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AGAMEMNON.

I am no seer, nor can I uninform'd
Trace out the secret purpose of your soul.

HECUBA.

Am I mistaken then, while I suppose
A foe in him who doth not mean me ill?

AGAMEMNON.

If 'tis your wish I should not be appriz'd,
We both are of one mind; you will not speak,
And I as little am dispos'd to hear.

HECUBA.

Without his aid no vengeance for my child
Can I obtain: yet why deliberate thus?
Prosper or fail I must take courage now.
O royal Agamemnon, by those knees
A suppliant I conjure you, by that beard,
And that right hand, victorious o'er your foes.

AGAMEMNON.

What do you wish for? To obtain your freedom?
This were not difficult.

HECUBA.

No, give me vengeance
On yonder guilty wretch, and I am willing
To linger out the remnant of my life
In servitude.

AGAMEMNON.

Then why implore our aid?

HECUBA.

For reasons you suspect not. Do you see
That breathless corse o'er which my tears I shed?

AGAMEMNON.

The corse I see; but cannot comprehend
What follows next.

HECUBA.

Him erst I bore and nurtur'd.

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AGAMEMNON.

Is the deceas'd, O miserable Dame,
One of your children?

HECUBA.

Not of those who fell
Beneath Troy's walls.

AGAMEMNON.

What! had you other sons?

HECUBA.

Yes, him you see, born in an evil hour

AGAMEMNON.

But where was he when Ilion was destroy'd?

HECUBA.

His Father, apprehensive of his death,
Convey'd him thence.

AGAMEMNON.

From all the other children
Which then he had, where plac'd he this apart?

HECUBA.

In this same region where his corse was found.

AGAMEMNON.

With Polymestor, sovereign of the land?

HECUBA.

He, to preserve that execrable gold,
Was hither sent.

AGAMEMNON.

But, by what ruthless hand,
And how, was he dispatch'd?

HECUBA.

By whom beside?
The murderer was his friend, the Thracian King

AGAMEMNON.

Was he thus eager? O abandon'd wretch,
To seize the gold!

HECUBA.

E'en thus; soon as he knew
Troy was o'erthrown.

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AGAMEMNON.

But where did you discover
The body, or who brought it?

HECUBA.

On the shore
This servant found it.

AGAMEMNON.

Or in quest of him
Or other task then busied?

HECUBA.

To fetch water
To lave Polyxena's remains, she went.

AGAMEMNON.

When he had slain him, it appears, his friend
Did cast him forth.

HECUBA.

He to the waves consign'd
The stripling's mangled corse.

AGAMEMNON.

O wretched woman,
Surrounded by immeasurable woes.

HECUBA.

I am undone; no farther ill remains
For me t' experience.

AGAMEMNON.

Ah! what woman e'er
Was born to such calamities?

HECUBA.

Not one
Exists, whose sorrows equal mine, unless
You of Calamity herself would speak.
Yet hear the motive why I clasp your knees.
If I appear to merit what I suffer,
I must be patient; but if not, avenge
My wrongs upon the man who 'gainst his guest
Such treachery could commit, who, nor the Gods

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Of Erebus beneath, nor those who rule
In Heaven above regarding, this vile deed,
Did perpetrate, e'en he with whom I oft
Partook the feast, on whom I shower'd each bounty,
Esteeming him the first of all my friends;
Yet, when at Ilion's palace with respect
He had been treated, a deliberate scheme
Of murder forming, he destroy'd my son,
On whom he deign'd not to bestow a tomb,
But threw his corse into the briny deep.
Tho' I indeed am feeble, and a slave,
Yet mighty are the Gods, and by their law
The world is rul'd: for by that law we learn
That there are Gods, and can mark out the bounds
Of justice and injustice; if such law
To you transmitted, be infring'd, if they
Who kill their guests, or dare with impious hand
To violate the altars of the Gods,
Unpunish'd scape, no equity is left
Among mankind. Deeming such base connivance
Unworthy of yourself, revere my woes,
Have pity on me, like a painter take
Your stand to view me, and observe the number
Of my afflictions; once was I a Queen,
But now am I a slave; in many a son
I once was rich, but now am I both old
And of my children reft, without a city,
Forlorn, and of all mortals the most wretched.
But whither would you go? With you I seem
To have no interest. Miserable me!
Why do we mortals by assiduous toil,
And such a painful search as their importance
Makes requisite, all other arts attain,
Yet not enough intent on the due knowledge
Of that sole Empress of the human soul
Persuasion, no rewards bestow on those
Who teach us by insinuating words

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How to procure our wishes? who can trust
Hereafter in prosperity? That band
Of my heroic Sons is now no more,
Myself a captive, am led forth to tasks
Unseemly, and e'en now these eyes behold
The air obscur'd by (7) Ilion's rising smoke.
It might be vain perhaps, were I to found
A claim to your assistance on your love:
Yet must I speak: my Daughter, who in Troy
Was call'd Cassandra, the prophetic dame,
Partakes your bed; and how those rapturous nights
Will you acknowledge, or to her how shew
Your gratitude for all the fond embraces
Which she bestows, O King, or in her stead
To me her mother? In the soul of man
Th' endearments of the night, by darkness veil'd,
Create the strongest interest. To my tale
Now listen: do you see that breathless corse?
Each act of kindness which to him is shewn,
Upon a kinsman of the Dame you love

(7) The inconsiderable width of the Hellespont, now called the strait of the Dardanelles, which divides the Thracian Chersonesus from the Continent of Asia, on which Troy stood not far from the coast, makes the literal truth of this circumstance by no means improbable. It was very natural for the Greeks, who had only passed this narrow frith, and not yet lanched their fleet into the main ocean, to speak of the voyage from Troy to their native land as yet unperformed: and after examining the passages pointed out by Dr. Musgrave, as instances of Euripides having repeatedly *changed the scene* from Thrace to Troy, I can consider them only as inaccuracies of expression, and by no means sufficient to authorise the charge of his having so grossly and repeatedly violated the unity of place; to preserve which, we must indeed suppose the tomb of Achilles, where Polyxena was sacrificed, to have been erected in the dominions of Polymestor, and not on the Sigeian promontory, where Strabo has placed it: but the account given of that hero's interment in the last book of the Odyssey, is worded in so vague a manner, it being only there said that his countrymen bore his body to the ships, and raised a tomb on the shore of the Hellespont, that it is possible for a succeeding writer, treading closely in the steps of Homer, to understand by what he there says, that the ships conveyed the body of Achilles to the opposite shore of the Hellespont, which was the Thracian Chersonesus.

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Will be conferr'd. But, in one point my speech
Is yet deficient. By the wondrous arts
Of Dædalus, or some benignant God,
Could I give voice to each arm, hand, and hair,
And each extremest joint, they round your knees
Should cling together, and together weep,
At once combining with a thousand tongues.
O monarch, O thou light of Greece, comply,
And stretch forth that avenging arm to aid
An aged woman, tho' she be a thing
Of nought, O succour: for the good man's duty
Is to obey the dread behests of justice,
And ever punish those who act amiss.

CHORUS.

'Tis wonderful, indeed, how all events
Happen to mortals, and the dread behests
Of fate, uncircumscrib'd by human laws,
Constrain us to form amities with those
To whom the most inveterate hate we bore,
And into foes convert our former friends.

AGAMEMNON.

To you, O Hecuba, your Son, your fortunes,
And your entreaties, is my pity due.
I in obedience to the Gods and Justice
Wish to avenge you on this impious friend,
Could I appear your interests to espouse,
Without the troops suspecting that I slay
The Thracian monarch for Cassandra's sake:
My terrors hence arise; the host esteem
Him our ally, and the deceas'd a foe:
What tho' you held him dear, his fate, the loss
Of you alone, affects not the whole camp.
Reflect too, that you find me well dispos'd
To share your toils, and in your cause exert
My utmost vigour; but, what makes me slow,
Is a well grounded fear of blame from Greece.

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HECUBA.

Alas! there's no man free: for some are slaves
To gold, to fortune others, and the rest,
The multitude or written laws restrain
From acting as their better judgement dictates.
But since you are alarm'd, and to the rabble
Yield an implicit deference, from that fear
I will release you; only to my schemes
Be privy, if some mischief I contrive
Against the murderer of my Son: but take
No active part. If, when the Thracian suffers,
As he shall suffer, 'mongst the Greeks a tumult
Break forth, or they attempt to succour him,
Restrain them, without seeming to befriend
My interests. As for what remains, rely
On me, and I will manage all things well.

AGAMEMNON.

How then? what mean you? With that aged hand
To wield a sword, and take away the life
Of that Barbarian, or by drugs endued
With magic power? the help you need, what arts
Can furnish? what strong arm have you to fight
Your battles? whence will you procure allies?

HECUBA.

These tents conceal a groupe of Trojan Dames.

AGAMEMNON.

Mean you those captives whom the Greeks have seiz'd

HECUBA.

With them I on the murderer will inflict
Due punishment.

AGAMEMNON.

How can the female sex
O'er men obtain a conquest?

HECUBA.

Numbers strike
A foe with terror, and the wiles of women
Are hard to be withstood.

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AGAMEMNON.

They may strike terror,
But in their courage I no trust can place.

HECUBA.

What? did not women slay Ægyptus' Sons,
And in their rage exterminate each male
From Lemnos? But leave me to find out means
How to effect my purpose. Thro' the camp
In safety this my faithful servant send;
And thou, when to my Thracian friend thou com'st,
Say, "Hecuba, erst Queen of Troy, invites
"Thee and thy children, on thy own account,
"No less than hers, because she to thy Sons
"And thee the self-same message must deliver."
The newly-slain Polyxena's interment
Defer, O Agamemnon; in one flame
That when their kindred corses are consum'd;
The Brother with the Sister, who demand
A twofold portion of their Mother's grief,
Together may be buried in one grave.

AGAMEMNON.

These rites shall be perform'd, which could the troops
Set sail, I needs must have denied: but now,
Since Neptune sends not an auspicious breeze,
Expecting a more seasonable voyage,
Here must we wait. But may success attend you;
For 'tis the common interest of mankind,
Of every individual, every state,
That he who hath transgress'd should suffer ill,
And Fortune crown the efforts of the virtuous.

[*Exit* AGAMEMNON.

CHORUS.

I. 1.

No more, O Troy, thy dreaded name
Conspicuous in the lists of fame,

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Midst fortresses impregnable shall stand,
In such thick clouds an armed host
Pours terrors from the Grecian coast,
And wastes thy vanquish'd land:
Shorn from thy rampir'd brow the crown
Of turrets fell; thy palaces o'erspread
With smoke lie waste, no more I tread
Thy wonted streets, my native town.

I. 2.

I perish'd at the midnight hour,
When, aided by the banquet's power,
Sleep o'er my eyes his earliest influence shed;
Retiring from the choral song
The sacrifice and festive throng,
Stretcht on the downy bed
The bridegroom indolently lay,
His massive spear suspended on the beam,
No more he saw the helmets gleam,
Or nautic troops in dread array.

II. 1.

While me the golden mirror's aid,
My flowing tresses taught to braid
In graceful ringlets with a fillet bound,
Just as I cast my robe aside,
And sought the couch; extending wide
Thro' every street this sound
Was heard; "O when, ye sons of Greece,
"This nest of robbers levell'd with the plain,
"Will ye behold your homes again?
"When shall these tedious labours cease?"

II. 2.

Then from my couch up starting, drest
Like Spartan nymph in zoneless vest,
At Dian's shrine an ineffectual prayer
Did I address; for hither led,
First having view'd my Husband dead,
Full oft I in despair,

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As the proud vessel sail'd from land,
Look'd back, and saw my native walls laid low,
Then fainting with excess of woe
At length lost sight of Ilion's strand.

III.

Helen that Sister to the sons of Jove,
And Paris Ida's swain,
With my curses still pursuing,
For to them I owe my ruin,
Me they from my country drove,
Never to return again,
By that detested spousal rite
On which Hymen never smil'd,
No, 'twas some Demon who with lewd delight
Their frantic souls beguil'd:
Her may ocean's waves no more
Waft to her paternal shore.

POLYMESTOR, HECUBA, CHORUS.

POLYMESTOR.

For thee, O Priam, my unhappy friend,
And you, my dearest Heeuba, I weep,
Beholding your distress, your city taken,
Your Daughter newly slain: alas! there's nought
To be relied on; fame is insecure,
Nor can the prosperous their enjoyments guard
Against a change of Fortune, for the Gods
Backward and forward turn her wavering wheel,
And introduce confusion in the world,
That we, because we know not will happen,
May worship them. But of what use are plaints
Which have no virtue to remove our woes?
If you my absence censure, be appeas'd,
For in the midst of Thracia's wide domains
I from these coasts was distant at the time
Of your arrival: soon as I return'd,
When from the palace I was issuing forth,

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This your attendant met me, and deliver'd
The message, hearing which, I hither came.

HECUBA.

O Polymestor, wretched as I am,
I blush to see thy face; because thou erst
In happier days didst know me, I with shame
Appear before thee in my present fortunes.
Nor can I look at thee with stedfast eyes:
But this thou will not deem to be a mark
Of enmity: the cause of such behaviour
Is only custom, which forbids our sex
To gaze on men.

POLYMESTOR.

No wonder you thus act
Under such circumstances. But what need
Have you of me, and wherefore did you send
To fetch me from the palace?

HECUBA.

I in private
A secret of importance would disclose
To thee and to thy children. From these tents
Give orders for thy followers to depart.

POLYMESTOR. (*to his attendants, who retire.*)

Withdraw; this solitary spot is safe.
For you and the confederate Grecian host
Are all attach'd to me. But 'tis incumbent
On you t' inform me what my prosperous fortunes
Can yield to succour my unhappy friends!
For this is what I wish to do.

HECUBA.

Say first,
If he my Son, whom this maternal hand
And his fond Father in thy mansions plac'd,
My Polydore yet live. I'll then pursue
My questions.

POLYMESTOR.

Yes, in him you still are blest.

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HECUBA.

How kind, how worthy of thyself that speech,
My dearest friend!

POLYMESTOR.

What farther would you know?

HECUBA.

If haply yet the youth remember aught
Of me his Mother?

POLYMESTOR.

Much he wish'd to come
And visit you in private.

HECUBA.

Is the gold
He brought from Troy preserv'd?

POLYMESTOR.

I keep it safe
In my own palace.

HECUBA.

Keep it if thou wilt:
But covet not the treasures of thy friends.

POLYMESTOR.

I do not covet them; my utmost wish
Is to enjoy, O Woman, what I have.

HECUBA.

Know'st thou then, what to thee and to thy sons
I want to say?

POLYMESTOR.

I know not; till in words
Your thoughts are signified.

HECUBA.

Bestow such love
On Polydore as thou receiv'st from me.

POLYMESTOR.

What is it that to me and to my children
You would disclose?

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HECUBA.

The spot, where deep in earth,
The antient treasures of all Priam's house
Lie buried.

POLYMESTOR.

Is this secret what you wish
Should to your Son be mentioned?

HECUBA.

Yes, by thee,
Because thou art a virtuous man!

POLYMESTOR.

But wherefore
Did you require these children should be present?

HECUBA.

For them to know the secret, if thou die,
Will be of great advantage.

POLYMESTOR.

You have spoken
Well and discreetly.

HECUBA.

Know'st thou where at Troy
Minerva's temple stands?

POLYMESTOR.

Is the gold there?
But by what mark shall I the spot distinguish?

HECUBA.

Above the surface rises a black stone.

POLYMESTOR.

Will you describe the place yet more minutely?

HECUBA.

The gold I in thy custody would place,
Which I from Ilion hither bring.

POLYMESTOR.

Where is it?
Conceal'd beneath your garment?

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HECUBA.

Midst a heap
Of spoils laid up within yon tents.

POLYMESTOR.

Where mean you?
These are the Grecian mariners' abode.

HECUBA.

In separate dwellings have they plac'd the captives?

POLYMESTOR.

But how can we rely upon the faith
Of those within? doth no man thither come?

HECUBA.

There's not a Greek within; we are alone:
But enter thou these doors: for now the host,
Impatient to weigh anchor, would return
From Ilion to their homes. Thou with thy children
T' accomplish all the dread behests of fate,
Shalt thither go where thou hast lodg'd my Son.

[*Exeunt* HECUBA *and* POLYMESTOR.

CHORUS.

Thou hast not yet received the blow,
But justice sure will lay thee low.
Like him who headlong from on high
Falls where no friendly haven's nigh,
Into the ocean's stormy wave,
Here shalt thou find a certain grave:
For twofold ruin doth impend
O'er him who human laws pursue,
And righteous Gods indignant view:
Thee shall the hope of gain mislead,
Which prompts thee to advance with speed,
And Pluto's loath'd abode descend:
Soon shalt thou press th' ensanguin'd strand,
Slain by a woman's feeble hand.

POLYMESTOR. (*within.*)

Ah me, the light that visited these eyes
Is darken'd.

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SEMICHORUS.

Heard ye, O my friends, the shriek
Of yonder Thracian?

POLYMESTOR. *(within.)*

Yet again, alas,
My children's foul and execrable murder!

SEMICHORUS.

My friends, some recent mischief hath within
Been perpetrated.

POLYMESTOR. *(within.)*

Tho' your feet are swift,
Ye shall not scape, for through the walls I'll burst
My passage.

SEMICHORUS.

With a forceful hand, behold
He brandishes the javelin. Shall we rush
To seize him? This important crisis bids us
Assist our Queen and Phrygia's valiant dames.

HECUBA.

Now do thy worst, and from their hinges rend
Yon massive gates: no more canst thou impart
To those lost eyes their visual orbs, nor see
Thy sons, whom I have slain, to life restor'd.

HECUBA, CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Hast thou, my honor'd mistress, caught the Thracian,
Over this treacherous friend hast thou prevail'd,
And all thy threats accomplish'd?

HECUBA.

Ye shall see him
Before the tent, without delay, depriv'd
Of sight, advancing with unsteady foot,
And the two breathless corses of his sons,
Whom I, assisted by the noblest matrons
Of Troy, have slain. Th' atonement he hath paid

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To my revenge, is just. But now behold
He issues forth: I will retire and shun
The Thracian chief's unconquerable rage.

POLYMESTOR, HECUBA, CHORUS.

POLYMESTOR.

Ah, whither am I going? wretched me!
Where am I? what supports me? With these hands
Groping my way like some four-footed beast,
How shall I turn me, to the right or left,
That I those murderous Phrygian dames may seize
Who have destroy'd me? Impious and accurst
Daughters of Ilion, in what dark recess
Do they escape me? Would to Heaven, O Sun,
Thou to these bleeding eye-balls could'st afford
A cure, that thou my blindness could'st remove.
But hush, I hear those women's cautious tread.
How shall I leap upon them? with their flesh
How shall I glut my rage, and for a feast
To hungry tigers cast their mangled bones,
In just requital of the horrid wrongs,
Which I from them, ah wretched me, have suffer'd?
But whither, by what impulse am I borne,
Leaving the corses of my Sons expos'd
To hellish Bacchanalians, as they lie
Torn by the dogs, and on the mountain's ridge
Cast forth unburied! Where shall I stand still?
Or whither shall I go? Like some proud bark
Tow'd into harbour, which contracts its sails;
I to that fatal chamber which contains
The corses of my murder'd sons rush onward
With speed involuntary.

CHORUS.

Hapless man,
How art thou visited by woes too grievous
To be endur'd! but by dread Jove thy foe,

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On him whose deeds are base, it is ordain'd,
That the severest punishments await.

POLYMESTOR.

Rouse, O ye Thracians, arm'd with ponderous spears,
Array'd in mail, for generous steeds renown'd,
A hardy race, whom Mars himself inspires.
To you, O Grecian troops, and both the sons
Of Atreus, I with clamorous voice appeal:
Come hither, I implore you by the Gods.
Do any of you hear me? is there none
Who will assist? why loiter ye? Those women,
Those captives have destroy'd me. Horrid wrongs
Have I endur'd: ah me, the foul reproach!
But whither shall I turn, or whither go?
Through the aerial regions shall I wing
My swift career to that sublime abode
Where Sirius or Orion from his eyes
Darts radiant flames? or, to perdition doom'd,
Shall I descend to Pluto's sable flood?

CHORUS.

He merits pardon, whosoe'er assail'd
By ills too grievous to be borne, shakes off
The loath'd incumbrance of a wretched life.

AGAMEMNON, POLYMESTOR, HECUBA, CHORUS.

AGAMEMNON.

Hearing thy shrieks I came: for Echo, child
Of craggy mountains, in no gentle note
Wafted those sounds tumultuous thro' the host.
Had we not known that by the Grecian spear
The towers of vanquish'd Phrygia are o'erthrown,
Such uproar would have caus'd no small alarm.

POLYMESTOR.

My dearest friend, soon as I heard your voice,
I instantly perceiv'd 'twas Agamemnon.
See you my sufferings?

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AGAMEMNON.

Wretched Polymestor!
Who hath destroy'd thee? who bereav'd of sight
Thy bleeding orbs, and those thy children slew?
Whoe'er the author of such deeds, his rage
Was dreadful sure 'gainst thee and 'gainst thy sons.

POLYMESTOR.

With the assistance of those captive dames,
Me Hecuba hath murder'd, more than murder'd.

AGAMEMNON.

What mean'st thou?—are you guilty of the crime
With which he charges you? and have you dar'd
To perpetrate an action thus audacious?

POLYMESTOR.

Ah me! what said you? is she near at hand?
Inform me where to find, that I may seize her,
And scatter wide to all the fowls of Heaven
Her mangled corse.

AGAMEMNON.

Ha! what is thy design?

POLYMESTOR.

Allow me, I conjure you by the Gods,
To grasp her with this frantic arm.

AGAMEMNON.

Desist,
And casting forth all rancour from thy heart,
Now plead thy cause; that, hearing both apart,
I with unbiass'd justice may decide,
If thou these sufferings merit'st.

POLYMESTOR.

I will speak.
There was one Polydore, the youngest son
Of those whom Hecuba to Priam bore;
Him erst removing from the Phrygian realm,
His Sire to me consign'd, that in my palace

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He might be nurtur'd, when that hoary King
The fall of Troy suspected: him I slew:
But hear my motives for the deed, to prove
How justly and how prudently I acted.
Your enemy, that boy, if he surviv'd
The ruin of his country, might, I fear'd,
Collect the scatter'd citizens of Troy,
And there again reside. I also fear'd,
That when the Greeks knew one of Priam's line
Was living, with a second fleet invading
The shores of Phrygia, they again might drain
Of their inhabitants our Thracian fields,
Involving us, their neighbours, in the vengeance,
They on their foes at Ilion wreak. To us
Already hath such neighbourhood, O King,
Prov'd baneful. But, appris'd of her son's fate,
Hecuba drew me hither, on pretence
She would inform me where in massive gold
The hidden treasures of old Priam's race
Beneath Troy's ruins were secur'd. Alone,
She with my children brought me to this tent,
That none beside might know. With bended knee,
While on a couch I sat, some on my left,
And others on my right, as with a friend,
Full many of the Trojan damsels took
Their places, holding up against the sun
My robe, the woof of an (8) Edonian loom:
Some feign'd t' admire it, others view'd my spear,
And stripp'd me of them both. From hand to hand
The matrons, seeming to caress my children,
Remov'd them far from their unhappy Sire:

(8) Edonia was a maritime district of Thrace, bordering on the Ægean sea, and divided from Macedonia on the South west by the river Strymon. This province is, by most writers, supposed to have derived its name from the mountain Edon, frequently mentioned by the Poets, on account of its being haunted by the female votaries of Bacchus, whom we also find often called Edoniæ.

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And after their fond speeches, in an instant,
(Could you believe it?) snatching up the swords,
Which they beneath their garments had conceal'd,
They stabb'd my sons, whom while I strove to aid,
In hostile guise their comrades held my arms
And feet; if I look'd up, they by the hair
Confin'd me; if I mov'd my hands, my struggles
Prov'd ineffectual, thro' the numerous band
Of women who assail'd me, and to close
The scene of my calamity, accomplish'd
A deed with more than common horror fraught,
For they tore out my bleeding eyes, and fled.
But, like a tiger starting up, I chas'd
These ruthless fiends, and with an hunter's speed
Each wall examined, dashing to the ground,
And breaking what I seiz'd. These cruel wrongs,
While I your interests study to maintain,
O Agamemnon, and dispatch your foe,
Have I endur'd. To spare a long harangue,
The whole of what 'gainst woman hath been said
By those of antient times, is saying now,
Or shall be said hereafter, in few words
Will I comprise; nor ocean's waves, nor earth,
Nurture so vile a race, as he who most
Hath with the sex conversed, but knows too well.

CHORUS.

Curb that audacious virulence of speech,
Nor, by thy woes embitter'd, thus revile
All womankind; the number of our sex
Is great, and some there are, whom as a mark
To envy, their distinguished worth holds forth,
Tho' some are justly number'd with the wicked.

HECUBA.

O Agamemnon, never ought the tongue
To have a greater influence o'er mankind
Than actions; but whoever hath done well,

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Ought to speak well; and he, whose deeds are base,
To use unseemly language, nor find means
By specious words to colour o'er injustice.
Full wise indeed are they to whom such art
Is most familiar: but to stand the test
Of time not wise enough; for they all perish,
Not one of them e'er scapes. These previous thoughts
To you, O mighty King, have I address'd.
But now to him I turn, and will refute
The fallacies he utter'd. What pretence
Hast thou for saying, that to free the Greeks
From such a second war, and for the sake
Of Agamemnon, thou didst slay my son?
For first, O villain, the Barbarian race
With Greece, nor will, nor ever can be friends.
What interest rous'd thy zeal? didst thou expect
To form a nuptial union! wert thou mov'd
By kindred ties, or any secret cause?
Greece with a fleet forsooth would have return'd
To lay thy country waste. Who, canst thou think,
Will credit such assertions? If the truth
Thou wilt confess, gold and thy thirst of gain
Were my Son's murderers. Why, when Troy yet flourish'd,
Why, when the city was on every side
Fenc'd by strong bulwarks, why, when Priam liv'd,
And Hector wielded a victorious spear,
Didst thou not, if thou hadst design'd to act
In Agamemnon's favor, at the time
When thou didst nurture my unhappy Son,
And in thy palace shelter, either slay,
Or to the Greeks surrender up the youth
A living prisoner? But when Ilion's light
Was utterly extinguish'd, when the smoke
Declar'd the city subject to our foes,
The stranger thou didst murder, at thy hearth
Who sought protection. To confirm thy guilt,
Now hear this farther charge: if thou to Greece

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Hadst been a friend indeed, thou should'st have given
The gold thou say'st thou keep'st, not for thine own,
But Agamemnon's sake, among the troops
Who suffer want, and from their native land
Have for a tedious season been detain'd.
But thou from those rapacious hands e'en now
Canst not endure to part with it, but hoard'st it
Still buried in thy coffers: as became thee,
Hadst thou train'd up my Son, hadst thou to him
Been a protector, great is the renown
Thou would'st have gain'd; for in distress the good
Are stedfast; but our prosperous fortunes swarm
With friends unbidden. Hadst thou been in want,
And Polydore abounded, a sure treasure
To thee would he have prov'd: but now no longer
In him hast thou a friend; thou of thy gold
Hast lost th' enjoyment, thou thy Sons hast lost,
And art thyself thus wretched. But to you,
O Agamemnon, now again I speak:
If you assist him, you will seem corrupt;
For you will benefit a man devoid
Of honor, justice, piety, or truth;
It might be said that you delight in evil;
But, I presume not to reproach my lords.

CHORUS.

How doth a virtuous cause inspire the tongue
With virtuous language!

AGAMEMNON.

On a stranger's woes
Reluctant I pronounce, but am constrain'd;
For shame attends the man who takes in hand
Some great affair, and leaves it undecided.
Know then, to me thou seem'st not to have slain
Thy guest thro' an atachment to my cause,
Nor yet to that of Greece, but that his gold
Thou might'st retain; tho' in this wretched state

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Thou speak to serve thy interests. Among you
Perhaps the murder of your guests seems light,
We Greeks esteem it base. If I acquit thee
How shall I scape reproach? Indeed I cannot:
Since thou hast dar'd to perpetrate the crime,
Endure the consequence.

POLYMESTOR.

Too plain it seems
Ah me! that, vanquish'd by a female slave,
Here shall I perish by ignoble hands.

HECUBA.

Is not this just for the atrocious deed
Which thou hast wrought?

POLYMESTOR.

My children, wretched me!
And these quench'd orbs.

HECUBA.

Griev'st thou, yet think'st thou not
That I lament my Son?

POLYMESTOR.

Malignant woman,
Do you rejoice in taunting my distress?

HECUBA.

In such revenge have not I cause for joy?

POLYMESTOR.

Yet not so hastily, when ocean's wave—

HECUBA.

Shall in a bark convey me to the shores
Of Greece?

POLYMESTOR.

Shall whelm you in its vast abyss
Fall'n from the shrouds.

HECUBA.

Rais'd thither by what impulse?

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POLYMESTOR.

Up the tall mast you with swift foot shall climb.

HECUBA.

On feather'd pinions borne, or how?

POLYMESTOR.

With form
Canine endued, and eyeballs glaring fire.

HECUBA.

Whence didst thou learn that I such wondrous change
Shall undergo?

POLYMESTOR.

Bacchus, the Thracian Seer,
Gave this response.

HECUBA.

To thee did he unfold
Nought of the grievous sufferings thou endur'st?

POLYMESTOR.

Then could you ne'er have caught me by your wiles.

HECUBA.

But on this change of being, after death,
Or while I yet am living, shall I enter?

POLYMESTOR.

After your death, and men shall call your tomb—

HECUBA.

By my new form, or what is it thou mean'st?

POLYMESTOR.

(9) The sepulchre of that vile brute, an object
Conspicuous to the mariner.

(9) Κυνος σημα, the term here made use of, is the same we meet with in Strabo, who calls the tomb of Hecuba by that name, and describes it as situated on that part of the coast of the Thracian Chersonesus which is opposite the mouth of the river Rhodius. Dr. Chandler, in his Travels through Asia, mentions seeing "Cynossema," or the barrow of Hecuba, which, he adds, "is still very conspicuous." He confirms Strabo's account of its site. The dwelling so long on this transformation of Troy's unhappy Queen will, no doubt, appear to some readers inconsistent with the dignity of the Tragic Muse, especially if they happen to recollect the

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HECUBA.

I care not;
My vengeance is complete.

POLYMESTOR.

Cassandra too,
Your Daughter, must inevitably bleed.

HECUBA.

Abomination! on thy guilty head
These curses I retort.

POLYMESTOR.

Her shall the Wife
Of Agamemnon slay, who sternly guards
His royal mansion.

HECUBA.

Such a frantic deed
As this may Tyndarus' Daughter ne'er commit!

POLYMESTOR.

She next uplifting the remorseless axe
Shall smite her Lord.

AGAMEMNON.

Ha! madman, dost thou court
Thy ruin?

POLYMESTOR.

Slay me; for the murderous bath
Awaits you, when to Argos you return.

ludicrous manner in which it is set forth by Plautus in his Mænechmi. I shall therefore only refer those, who wish for a more circumstantial account of Hecuba's Metamorphosis, to Ovid, where they will find her, "Sithonios ululare per agros." He differs, indeed, in some respects from Euripides, particularly in the representing her as yet alive when this change of form took place; but in Quintus Calaber her metamorphosis into the canine species precedes the departure of the Greeks from Troy, and is accompanied with an immediate petrifaction of her whole frame; τῆς δ' αὖσα λαΐνη ποσὶν ἔμπεδος ἔστη Θοῶς, l. 14. v. 399; the Poet, however, represents her, even in that state, as borne away by the victors with the rest of their plunder. The inspired Cassandra, in the Trojan Captives of Euripides, just foretells the death of Hecuba, but, with a singular degree of elegance and delicacy, adds, ἄλλα μὲν σιγῶ; I spare the shameful sequel.

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AGAMEMNON.

Will ye not drag him from my sight by force?

POLYMESTOR.

Hear you with grief what I announce?

AGAMEMNON.

My followers,
Why stop ye not the miscreant's boding mouth?

POLYMESTOR.

This mouth be clos'd for ever: I have spoken.

AGAMEMNON.

Will ye not cast him with the utmost speed
Upon some desert island, since he dares
To speak with such licentiousness?—Depart,
O wretched Hecuba, and both those corses
Deposit in the grave. But, as for you,
Ye to your lord's pavilions must repair,
O Phrygian dames: for I perceive the gales
Rising to waft us homeward: may success
Attend the voyage to our native land!
And in our mansions may we find all well,
Freed from these dangers!

CHORUS.

To the haven go,
And to the tents, my friends, t' endure the toils
Our lords impose: for thus harsh fate enjoins.

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ORESTES.

Μήροκλονον φίλευμα, σοινάλως παίρες. [redacted]

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

ELECTRA.

HELEN.

CHORUS OF ARGIVE DAMSELS, ATTENDANTS ON ELECTRA.

ORESTES.

MENELAUS.

TYNDARUS.

PYLADES.

A MESSENGER.

HERMIONE.

A PHRYGIAN.

APOLLO.

SCENE—AN OPEN COURT BEFORE THE PALACE AT ARGOS.

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ORESTES.

ELECTRA.

The Palace Doors thrown open, discover ORESTES *sleeping on a Couch.*

THERE's not an evil in the power of words
T' express, no dire calamity, no scourge
Inflicted by the Gods, whose weight the race
Of man endures not. For e'en he who sprung,
'Tis said, from Jove, e'en Tantalus the blest,
(Nor do I speak in too presumptuous terms
Of his past fortunes, when I style them blest)
Scar'd by the rock impending o'er his head,
Floats in the midway air, and suffers thus,
As fame relates, because, when with the Gods
Admitted, tho' a mortal, to partake
The social board, by an unbridled tongue
He did offend most foully: he begot
Pelops, the Sire of Atreus, whom the Fates,
As in their loom they wove his vital thread,
Ordain'd with discord and fraternal hate
To vex Thyestes. Why should I recount
Such execrable deeds? When he had slain
Thyestes' children, Atreus at the banquet
Plac'd them before their Father. But to Atreus
And Cretan Ærope, for I suppress
The intermediate fortunes of our house,
Was Agamemnon the illustrious born,
(If to the chief who so ignobly died,
The title of illustrious can belong)

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And Menelaus; Helen, by the Gods,
Abhorr'd, was Menelaus' Wife, his brother
The royal Agamemnon to his bed
Took Clytemnestra a distinguished dame:
Three daughters from that impious Mother sprung
Chrysomethis, the victim Iphigenia (1),
And I Electra, with one son Orestes.
My Mother, casting o'er his head the folds
Of an inextricable garment, slew
Her Lord: but why she slew him, to relate
Would ill become a virgin; I this deed
Of darkness leave for public speculation.
But why should we charge Phœbus with injustice,
Tho' he enjoin'd Orestes to destroy
His Mother? Not by all was he for this
Applauded; yet he slew her in obedience
To the prophetic Deity. I too,
As far as woman could, that action shar'd,
And with us valiant Pylades conspir'd.
Wretched Orestes wasting thro' disease
Hence lingers on a couch, his Mother's blood
With madness fires his brain: I dread to name
Those Goddesses, th' Eumenides, who strike
His inmost soul with terror. But this day
Is now the sixth since his slain Mother's corse
Was purified by fire, and in that space
No food hath he receiv'd, nor once hath lav'd
His wearied frame; but in his mantle wrapt,
Soon as the frenzy leaves him, when returns
His better reason, weeps: but from the couch

(1) In both the Greek and Latin, the quantity of Iphigenia's name is the same with that of her Great Grandmother Hippodamia, the wife of Pelops, the last syllable but one being long: but it is now almost universally pronounced otherwise in English, particularly since two of our first poets, Dryden and Pope, have by their example authorized the contraction into Iphigema. The arbitrium et jus et norma loquendi are by Horace assigned to custom; and the translator thought it became him to acquiesce, rather than seem to dispute such authority by neglecting to observe its directions.

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Starts ever and anon, swift as the steed
Bursting his yoke. But Argos hath decreed;
Beneath his roof or at the sacred hearth,
That no man shall receive us, no man speak
To us our Mother's murderers. But this day
The city hath appointed for deciding
By public vote, whether with showers of stones
They will o'erwhelm us, or with sharpen'd sword
Lop off our heads. One hope of scaping death
We yet have left; for Menelaus comes
From Troy, and crowding with his fleet the port
Of Nauplia, anchors on these shores, full long
A wanderer in his voyage. To our palace
Hath he sent forward Helen, guilty cause
Of many woes, observing when the night
Conceal'd her with its shade, lest one of those
Whose sons at Ilion fell, had he by day
Mark'd her arrival, might have hurl'd the stone
To smite her: here within she sits, lamenting
Her Sister, and the fortunes of this house.
But, to alleviate her distress, she finds
Hermione her Daughter, from the realm
Of Sparta bearing when he sail'd for Troy,
Beneath these roofs, whom Menelaus left
Entrusted to my Mother's guardian care,
In her rejoicing she forgets her woes.
But I observe each avenue, to see
If Menelaus come, for every help
We have beside is feeble; if in him
We find not a protector, fall we must.
No prop supports the house of wretchedness!

HELEN, ELECTRA (ORESTES ON A COUCH.)

HELEN.

O thou, from Spartan Clytemnestra sprung,
And Agamemnon, who hast long remain'd
A virgin; miserable Electra, say

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Both how thou far'st, and how thy brother fares,
That wretch Orestes who his Mother slew?
To thee, without pollution, by transferring
That crime from you to Phœbus, can I speak.
Yet I bewail the fate of Clytemnestra
My Sister, whom, since I to Ilion sail'd
(For sail I did, by Heaven's decrees inspir'd
With frenzy), never have these eyes beheld,
But reft of her that sad event I mourn.

ELECTRA.

What need of Words, when you a present witness,
O Helen, Agamemnon's race behold,
Plung'd in calamity? Sleep's balmy joys
I taste not, seated by my Brother's corse,
He hardly breathes, nor when I term him dead,
Do I his woes exaggerate. You meantime,
Tho' blest yourself, and tho' your Lord is blest,
Come to th' abode of us who are most wretched.

HELEN.

How long hath he lain prostrate on his couch?

ELECTRA.

E'er since he in maternal gore imbrued
His hands.

HELEN.

O hapless youth, O wretched fate
Of her whom her own furious offspring slew!

ELECTRA.

Surrounded by afflictions I despair.

HELEN.

O virgin, I conjure thee by the Gods,
Wilt thou comply with the request I make?

ELECTRA.

In strict attendance on my hapless brother
Am I engag'd, and have no leisure.

HELEN.

Wilt thou
Go to my Sister's tomb?

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ELECTRA.

You mean my Mother's.

On what account?

HELEN.

To bear my votive tresses,
And sprinkle due libations to her shade.

ELECTRA.

Are not you suffer'd to attend in person
The sepulchre of one you hold so dear?

HELEN.

Before the Argive citizens I blush
To shew my face.

ELECTRA.

At length are you, who erst
Basely your home abandon'd, grown discreet.

HELEN.

Though thou hast said the truth, yet dost thou speak
Unlike a friend to me.

ELECTRA.

What can excite
Your shame amidst Mycene's kindred race?

HELEN.

I dread the Sires of those who fell at Troy.

ELECTRA.

All Argos with one voice proclaims you curst.

HELEN.

My fears removing, O do thou confer
On me this favour.

ELECTRA.

I my Mother's grave
Cannot endure to see.

HELEN.

'Twere sure unseemly
These offerings by a servant to convey.

ELECTRA.

Why on such errand scruple you to send
Hermione your Daughter?

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HELEN.

It becomes not
A bashful maid in public to advance.

ELECTRA.

She by this action would repay the cares
Of the deceas'd, who nurtur'd her.

HELEN.

Well spoken;
To thee I yield, O Virgin, and will send
My daughter, for thy words are just.—Come forth,
Hermione, without the palace, take
These offerings in thy hand, and my shorn tresses:
Soon as thou reachest Clytemnestra's tomb
Pour mingled streams of honey, milk, and wine,
On her sepulchral hilloc as thou stand'st,
And say; "On thee these gifts thy sister Helen
"Bestows, not daring to approach thy grave,
"Because she fears a lawless Argive crowd."
Implore her with benignant care to watch
O'er me, thyself, my husband, and these two
By the prophetic God involv'd in ruin,
Then, as the ties of kindred love enjoin,
From me each offering promise that is due
To the deceas'd. My daughter, go with speed;
And when these holy rites thou hast perform'd,
Without delay forget not to return. [*Exit* HELEN.

ELECTRA.

O Nature, to some mortals what a source
Of mischief art thou! but how great a blessing
To those whom thou with virtue hast endued!
Mark how she cuts the edges of her hair,
Studious her wonted graces to retain,
(2) And the same woman still. Thee may the Gods

(2) The artful behaviour of Helen is described by Casa, Archbishop of Benevento, in the following verses, the insertion of which may not be unacceptable to the classical reader:

Ut captâ rediens Helenâ cum conjuge Trojâ,
Lento homine atq; animi lenis nimiumq; remissi,

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Pursue with hate for having ruin'd me,
My brother, and all Greece. Wretch that I am!
But in my plaintive notes to join, again
My lov'd companions come: perhaps from sleep
Orestes now reposing will they rouse,
And from these eyes force tears when I behold
My brother frantic. Tread, my dearest friends,
With silent foot; let no rude sound be heard:
For grateful is your kindness, yet to wake him
Would be unfortunate.

CHORUS, ELECTRA, (ORESTES ON HIS COUCH.)

ELECTRA.

Hush, hush, my friends!
Advance on tiptoe, gently, gently step,
Keep at a distance from my Brother's couch.

CHORUS.

Thee I obey.

ELECTRA.

In whispers, O my friend,
Speak like the flute that's form'd of slender reed.

CHORUS.

Lo in a tone, soft as the breathing pipe,
I to my words give utterance.

ELECTRA.

It is well,
E'en thus: yet sink your voice. Move gently on

Incidit in cædem ipsam et funus ferte sororis,
Quam preceps miseri virtus jugularat Orestis,
Succisam de more comam missura sepulto
Germanæ cineri, fertur dempsisse capillo
Vix tandem e summo paulum, ne ferte placeret
Tonsa nimis mentuens Spartanis improba mœchis

A copious discussion of the subject, in letters between Casa and Peter Victorius, who understood this passage in a different sense, construing Παρ' ακρας, "close to the roots" instead of "at the extremities," and Παλαια γενη, "still rētaining her antient beauty," occur in Michaelis Bruti Epist. Clar. Vir. p. 1—19. Lugd. 1561; & Casæ Lat. Monumenta, Florent, 1564; p. 2, 86, & 201.

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With silent step. Say for what cause ye came.
For here he lies long wrapt in quiet sleep.

CHORUS.

Tell us, lov'd Maid, how fares he?

ELECTRA.

In what words
Shall I express his woes? He yet just breathes,
And groans at frequent intervals.

CHORUS.

What say'st thou?
O wretch!

ELECTRA.

You'll kill me, if you make him ope
Those eye-lids heavy with delicious slumber.

CHORUS.

Unhappy youth, what punishments hath Heaven
On thee inflicted! grievous are thy toils.

ELECTRA.

Alas! alas! unjust was the response
Unjust Apollo gave, when from the tripod
Of Themis he impell'd us to commit
That execrable murder of our Mother.

CHORUS.

See'st thou? his limbs beneath the garment move.

ELECTRA.

Because unseasonably, with clamorous voice,
Intruding, his repose you have disturb'd.

CHORUS.

I think he slumbers still.

ELECTRA.

Are ye not gone?
From his apartment will ye not retire
In quiet, lest you scare him?

CHORUS.

Yet he sleeps.

ELECTRA.

These words are grateful.

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CHORUS.

Venerable Night,
O thou who giv'st sweet sleep to man with toils
Exhausted, borne on sable pinions, come
From Erebus to Agamemnon's house,
For, by calamity and grief o'erwhelm'd,
We sink to rise no more.

ELECTRA.

Ye are too loud,

CHORUS.

No.

ELECTRA.

Leave the couch in silence; O refrain
Your tongues, and grant him the calm joys of sleep.

CHORUS.

Say what will be the period of his woes?

ELECTRA.

Death. For what else but death can now ensue?
He loathes all food.

CHORUS.

His fate is then too plain,

ELECTRA.

Apollo was the author of our ruin,
When he pronounc'd that blood demanded blood,
That she who slew our Father should be slain.

CHORUS.

Tho' justice urg'd, yet from her Children's hands
Foul was the blow.

ELECTRA.

My Mother, thou didst smite,
Didst perish; but my Father, and the race
Sprung from thy womb, e'en us, hast thou involv'd
Deep in perdition; we are like the dead:
For while thou dwell'st amid the shades beneath,
I, more than half my life, in groans, in plaints,
And midnight tears, consume; unwedded, childless,

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Torn with afflictions which can never end,
I thus drag out the remnant of my days.

CHORUS.

Approach, take heed, Electra, lest death steal
Upon thy Brother ere thou art aware,
For this long intermission of his frenzy
I like not.

ORESTES, *(waking.)*

Sleep, thou med'cine, who reliev'st
Every disease, how sweetly didst thou come
To visit me, e'en on that hour when most
Thy help I needed; venerable oblivion
Of misery, how art thou endued with wisdom,
Benignant Goddess, whom each wretch adores!
But whence, or by what means did I come hither?
For I have lost my reason, and forget
All that has pass'd.

ELECTRA.

Dear Brother, with what joy
Have I beheld thee sleep! — Shall I support
Thy feeble body?

ORESTES.

Lend your pious hand,
Wipe off that foam which loads my clammy mouth,
And on these eye-lids hangs.

ELECTRA.

Lo, I perform
The grateful service, and am nothing loth
To tend my Brother with a Sister's care.

ORESTES.

Permit me on that arm awhile to lean,
And from my face remove the clotted hair,
For it obstructs my sight.

ELECTRA.

How are the ringlets
Of this thy miserable head defil'd,
From being long unwash'd!

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ORESTES.

Upon the bed
Lay me again; soon as the frenzy leaves me
I droop unnerv'd, and feel each limb grow weak.

ELECTRA.

See how the couch to the sick man is welcome,
A thing we love not, but which oft we need.

ORESTES.

Stretch forth again and raise me from the couch.

CHORUS.

The sick thro' listlessness are hard to please.

ELECTRA.

Wilt thou not set thy foot upon the ground
After so long an interval? In all things
Variety affords delight.

ORESTES.

Most gladly:
For this appears like health, and to seem well,
E'en tho' we are not, is of some advantage.

ELECTRA.

Now, O my Brother, to my voice attend,
While yet thou by the Furies art allow'd
Thy senses to retain.

ORESTES.

Is there aught new
You would disclose to me? if it be good,
You will rejoice me; but if fraught with ill,
Already I've enough to make me wretched.

ELECTRA.

Thy Uncle Menelaus is arrived;
In Nauplia's haven lies his anchor'd fleet.

ORESTES.

What say you? With auspicious beams of light,
The cloud of our afflictions to dispell,
Comes he our kinsman, he who by the ties
Of gratitude was to our Father bound?

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ELECTRA.

He comes, indeed; believe me, when I add,
Helen accompanies his march from Troy.

ORESTES.

Had he been sav'd alone, he had been happier;
But, if he bring his Consort, he comes laden
With no small mischief.

ELECTRA.

Tyndarus hath begotten
A race of Daughters, by their shame distinguish'd,
And infamous thro' Greece.

ORESTES.

Now be it yours,
(For surely it is possible,) to act
A widely different part from those vile women;
Nor let your virtue be to words alone
Confin'd, but deeply rooted in the heart.

ELECTRA.

My Brother, how those eye-balls roll! sure thou,
Who but this moment wert in thy right mind,
Art suddenly grown frantic.

ORESTES.

O, my Mother,
Forbear to rouse against me, I beseech,
Those blood-stain'd Virgins arm'd with hissing snakes;
See, see they leap upon my couch.

ELECTRA.

Poor wretch,
Lie still; these visions are but fancy's coinage.

ORESTES.

Me, mighty Phœbus, with their dog-ey'd glare,
Frowning askance, those Priestesses of Hell,
E'en those terrific Goddesses, would murder.

ELECTRA.

I will not loose, but hold thee with firm hand,
Lest hence with inauspicious rage thou spring.

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ORESTES.

Let me alone; one of my Furies too
Are you who grasp me round the waist, beneath
The yawning depth of Tartarus to plunge me.

ELECTRA.

Ah, wretched me! what aid can I obtain
When Heaven itself's against us?

ORESTES.

Reach my bow,
The present of Apollo, who ordain'd
I with this sounding weapon should repell
Those direful Goddesses whene'er they came
To scare me into madness.

ELECTRA.

Can a God
By human arm be wounded?

ORESTES.

From my sight
Unless they vanish.— Heard ye the loud twang?
Behold ye not the winged arrows sped
With force unerring from a distant bow?
But, ah! what means this strange delay? Ascend
Th' etherial fields, on rapid pinions borne,
And charge Apollo's oracles with guilt.
Why droop my spirits? wherefore do my lungs
Retain no power of breathing? from the couch
Ah, whither have I wander'd? But again
The storm I see subsides, and all is calm.
My Sister, covering with a veil your head,
Why do you weep? It shames me to involve
In my calamities a guiltless maid.
My woes bewail no longer: you indeed
Approv'd the project, but 'twas I that slew
My Mother, tho' the guilt I charge on Phœbus,
Who, after he had urg'd me to commit
An action the most impious, with vain words,
Not in effect, consol'd me. For my Sire,

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I deem, if him I to his face had question'd,
Whether by filial duty I was bound
To slay my Mother, would with many prayers
Have earnestly conjur'd me by this beard
In the maternal bosom not to plunge
My sword, since he to life could ne'er return,
And I must hence be thus completely wretched!
Yet, O my Sister, now remove that veil,
And tho' we are unhappy, cease to weep.
But whensoe'er you see my reason lost,
Curb and console my frenzy; oft as you
Lament for our afflictions, 'tis my part
To give you soothing counsel: from a friend
Benignant offices like these are grateful.
But to an inner chamber, hapless maid,
Awhile retiring, close those sleepless eyes,
Refresh yourself with wholesome food, and bathe
That wearied body in the cooling spring;
For if you leave me, or thro' long attendance
On me, contract diseases, I must perish,
For I have you, and you alone to aid me,
Deserted, you perceive, by all beside.

ELECTRA.

Not thus: with thee I am resolv'd in death
As well as life to share, for either state
Is now to me the same If thou expire,
Ah, what can I, a feeble woman, do,
How find support alone? of Brother, Sire,
And every friend bereft. Yet, if thy pleasure
Be such, I ought t'obey thee. But recline
Upon the couch, and suffer not thy fears
To make thee start up hastily, but rest
In the same posture: for although thou feel
No sickness, if thou think thyself diseas'd,
Like real maladies can fancy wound [*Exit* ELECTRA.

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CHORUS.

O D E.

I.

Upborne on rapid wings, O Goddesses, who fire
The soul with madness, who in tears delight,
Nor imitate gay Bacchus' festive rite,
Ye fell Eumenides, ye swarthy choir,
Who midst the boundless tracts of air, to smite
The crest of guilt, direct your way,
And every murderous deed requite:
From Orestes' tortur'd breast,
To you, to you I pray,
Banish distraction's raging pest.
What toils, ordain'd to perish, wretched youth,
O son of Agamemnon, didst thou brave,
Obedient to the voice of aweful truth,
Apollo's dread response pour'd from earth's central cave.

II.

Where is thy mercy, Jove? for ah, what tortures rend
The murderer's bosom! adding tears to tears,
Some evil genius wakes these conscious fears,
And bids his mother's blood from earth ascend
These mansions to pollute: his foul disgrace,
His loss of reason I deplore.
Prosperity with man's frail race
Lasts not e'en thro' life's short day,
We sink to rise no more,
As when the sail is rent away
From the swift bark by some God's vengeful hand,
Plung'd in an ocean of tempestuous woe,
What house henceforth our reverence shall demand,
If we behold the race of Tantalus laid low?
But royal Menelaus comes, from far
Distinguish'd by his graceful mien, as one
Who springs from Tantalus' illustrious blood;

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O thou, who with a thousand ships didst anchor
On Asia's coasts, all hail; for in an hour
Most fortunate com'st thou whose utmost wishes
Have been accomplish'd by th' indulgent Gods.

MENELAUS, ORESTES, CHORUS.

MENELAUS.

Thee, well-known mansion, from the siege of Troy
At length returning, I with mingled pleasure
And grief behold; for by severer woes
These eyes have never seen a house besieg'd.
Anchoring at Malea, I the piteous tale
Of Agamemnon's fate, and by his Wife
How he was slain, there learn'd: for from the waves
The sailor's prophet (3) Glaucus, who unfolds
Sage Nereus' oracles, that God renown'd
For strict veracity, arose, and utter'd
With too distinct a voice these words; "Thy Brother,
"O Menelaus, in th' accursed bath
"Plung'd by his Consort lies, and thence no more
"Shall he emerge." Me and my hardy troops
These tidings caus'd to shed full many a tear.
But soon as I the coast of Nauplia reach'd,
And landed Helen here, when I expected
To have embrac'd in these fond arms Orestes
The son of Agamemnon, and his mother,
As if they yet had liv'd and prosper'd both;
I by a certain fisherman was told
Of Clytemnestra's murder. Gentle virgins,
Inform me where is Agamemnon's son,
Who dar'd to perpetrate this impious deed?

(3) "Apollonius Rhodius, in his Argonautics, l. 1. ver. 1310. "relates "a similar appearance of Glaucus, who is there likewise called the Pro-"phet of Nereus." Brunck. The appearance and prophesy of Glaucus to the Argonauts is likewise recorded by Diodorus Siculus. Pausanias informs us, that the Glaucus here spoken of was a fisherman of Anthedon in Bœotia; and that he chanced to taste a certain herb, which caused him to become a Sea God, and foretell future events.

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For he was yet an infant in the arms
Of Tyndarus' daughter, when I left my home
And sail'd for Ilion; hence, should I behold,
I cannot recollect him.

ORESTES.

I am he
For whom, O Menelaus, you enquire;
I am Orestes, willingly to you
Will I disclose my sufferings, but first cling
Around your knees, and sue in humble words
For pity, tho' the boughs by suppliants borne
Are wanting: save, O save me, for you come
Just in the crisis of my woes.

MENELAUS.

Ye Gods,
What spectre from the shades do I behold?

ORESTES.

Well have you spoken: for I am too wretched
To be accounted still a living man,
Although I view the sun.

MENELAUS.

How bristle up
Thy clotted locks!

ORESTES.

My torments are not owing
To what I see, they spring from what I've done.

MENELAUS.

With those parch'd eye-balls horribly thou glar'st.

ORESTES.

My body is consum'd; but of my name
I am not yet depriv'd.

MENELAUS.

That alter'd form
With wonder I behold.

ORESTES.

I am the man
Who slew my mother.

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MENELAUS.

This I heard: no more;
For evil deeds should cautiously be mention'd.

ORESTES.

I cease: but on my head some Demon showers
Abundant curses.

MENELAUS.

What dost thou endure,
And by what malady art thou destroy'd?

ORESTES.

By conscience, which brings back atrocious crimes
To my remembrance.

MENELAUS.

What is it thou mean'st?
By speaking plainly wisdom is display'd,
And not in mystic riddles.

ORESTES.

Sorrow gnaws
My inmost vitals.

MENELAUS.

She is a severe,
Yet placable Divinity.

ORESTES.

Combin'd
With madness to avenge my mother's blood.

MENELAUS.

But when began this frenzy? name the day.

ORESTES.

As o'er my wretched mother's corse I heap'd
The tomb.

MENELAUS.

Wert thou at home, or didst thou sit
By the funereal pyre?

ORESTES.

A nightly guard
Over her bones I watch'd.

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MENELAUS.

To raise thee up
From earth, when fallen, was any one at hand?

ORESTES.

Yes, Pylades, who joined with me to slay
My mother, partner in the bloody deed.

MENELAUS.

But by what phantoms art thou vex'd?

ORESTES.

Methought
I saw three hideous maids arise, whose looks
Resemble night.

MENELAUS.

The virgins thou describ'st
I know, but will not name them.

ORESTES.

They inspire
Just awe; beware, and speak not of them rashly.

MENELAUS.

Do they, in vengeance for maternal gore,
Inflame thy soul with madness.

ORESTES.

Wretched me!
With what inveterate rage am I pursued!

MENELAUS.

Are not such horrid punishments the due
Of those who perpetrate these horrid deeds?

ORESTES.

But from myself can I transfer the charge —

MENELAUS.

O speak not of thy father's death: for this
Were indiscreet.

ORESTES.

On Phœbus, who enjoin'd me
To slay my mother.

MENELAUS.

In the laws of justice
And honor inexperienc'd.

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ORESTES.

We obey
The God' commands; for whatsoe'er they be,
Still are they Gods.

MENELAUS.

Doth not Apollo yield
Some aid in thy afflictions?

ORESTES.

He delays:
Slow is the nature of th' immortal powers.

MENELAUS.

How long the time since Clytemnestra drew
Her latest breath?

ORESTES.

Six days: the pyre yet smokes.

MENELAUS.

How swiftly do those Goddesses from thee
Claim an atonement for thy mother's death!

ORESTES.

Unwisely, yet with truth against thy friends
Hast thou maintain'd this charge.

MENELAUS.

Of what avail
To thee hath been this vengeance of thy Sire?

ORESTES.

It hath not yet avail'd me, and I deem
Whatever is delay'd a thing of nought.

MENELAUS.

How stand'st thou in th' affections of the city,
After this action?

ORESTES.

I am so abhorr'd,
That none will speak to me.

MENELAUS.

Hast thou neglected,
By such lustrations as the laws ordain,
To cleanse thy bloody hands?

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ORESTES.

'Gainst me the doors
Of every house to which I go are clos'd.

MENELAUS.

What citizens are they, who from the land
Strive to expel thee?

ORESTES.

Oeax, who transfers
To me the hate which he against my Sire
Conceiv'd at Troy.

MENELAUS.

I understand thee well;
On thee this furious brother would avenge
The death of Palamedes.

ORESTES.

In that crime
I shar'd not: but I (4) utterly am ruin'd.

MENELAUS.

Who else conspire against thee? are they some
Of slain Ægisthus' friends?

ORESTES.

With cruel taunts,
They who engage the public ear, revile me.

MENELAUS.

But do they still allow thee to retain
The sceptre Agamemnon bore?

ORESTES.

What mean you?
They will not even suffer me to live.

MENELAUS.

Inform me as distinctly as thou canst.

(4) Brunck, in a note on this line, which has caused a variety of opinions among the preceding commentators, and induced Dr. Morell and Dr. Musgrave to hazard each his different conjectural alteration, observes, that the expression δια τριων, hic nihil aliud est quam, Παυλαχη aut Παυλωσας. The term τριτοπλους, in the Troades, is with one assent rendered gravibus procellis; and it is well known, that the term "*thrice*" is frequently used, as well in the English language as in the antient classical writers, to denote "*very*," as τρις μακαρας, ter beati, thrice happy.

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What practices are carrying on against thee.

ORESTES.

On us this day is sentence to be pass'd.

MENELAUS.

Exile, or death, or somewhat short of death?

ORESTES.

We by th' assembled city shall be ston'd.

MENELAUS.

But from the limits of this realm by flight,
Why dost not thou escape?

ORESTES.

With brazen arms
Am I encompass'd.

MENELAUS.

By thy private foes,
Or the whole realm of Argos?

ORESTES.

In one word,
All are combin'd to take my life away.

MENELAUS.

O wretched man, on the extremest verge
Of fate thou stand'st.

ORESTES.

On you I rest the hope
Of finding an asylum in my woes:
But since a prosperous visitant you come
To the unhappy, portion out your bliss
Among your friends, nor to yourself alone
Keep all the good you freely have receiv'd;
But be content to share my labours too,
My father's benefits, to me his son
Repaying, who such debts with justice claim:
For they who in calamity desert us,
Are but in name, and not in deed, our friends.

CHORUS.

Behold the Spartan Tyndarus hither comes
Tottering with aged step, in sable vest

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Array'd, and shorn in a funereal guise
For his slain daughter.

ORESTES.

I, O Menelaus,
Expire, for Tyndarus hither doth advance,
He, in whose presence, conscious as I am
Of these foul deeds, it shames me to appear.
For he and Leda nourish'd me, while yet
I was an infant, and on me bestow'd
Full many a kiss, as in their arms they bore
The son of Agamemnon, and rever'd me
No less than the immortal Twins of Jove.
Them, for such kindness, (O my wretched heart!)
Have I with foul ingratitude repaid.
What darkness o'er my visage shall I spread,
Or how before me place so thick a cloud,
As to conceal me from the searching eyes
Of that incens'd and venerable man?

TYNDARUS, MENELAUS, ORESTES, CHORUS.

TYNDARUS.

Where is my daughter's husband Menelaus?
For as I pour'd libations on the tomb
Of Clytemnestra; with his wife I heard
He had in safety reach'd the Nauplian coast,
After an absence of full many years.
Lead on; for close beside him would I stand
Ready to greet my friend, whom it is long
Since I have seen.

MENELAUS.

Hail, O thou aged man,
Who didst enjoy with Jove one common bide.

TYNDARUS.

Thee too, my son-in-law, may health attend!
Ah, how unhappy is it that we know not
Aught of the future! He, the wretch I hate,
That serpent reeking with maternal gore,

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Before the portals brandishes his sting,
And darts forth venom. To this impious murderer,
O Menelaus, wherefore wilt thou speak?

MENELAUS.

What mean'st thou? He's my dearest brother's son.

TYNDARUS.

Could one so vile from him derive his birth?

MENELAUS.

From Agamemnon sprung, he justly claims
My reverence, if unhappy.

TYNDARUS.

Thou hast sojourn'd
Among Barbarians, till thou art thyself
Grown a Barbarian.

MENELAUS.

'Tis a Grecian part,
Our kindred ever to revere.

TYNDARUS.

Nor aim
At soaring 'bove the laws.

MENELAUS.

The wise submit
To whatsoe'er necessity ordains.

TYNDARUS.

Hold, if thou wilt, a principle so mean;
I scorn in these opinions to concur.

MENELAUS.

Passion conspiring with old age obscures
Thy reason.

TYNDARUS.

Was the subject of my strife
With him about pre-eminence in wisdom?
If what is right and wrong, to all mankind,
Be evident: what folly can exceed
That of the impious wretch, who hath not paid
To justice due attention, nor observ'd
Those public laws, by which all Greece is bound?

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For, smitten by my daughter's ruthless hand,
Since Agamemnon breath'd his last (a deed
So infamous I never can applaud)
'Gainst her, Orestes was in duty bound
To have requir'd atonement for the blood
Of his slain father, urging the pursuit
Till from the palace he had cast her forth
An exile; hence, in this distressful state,
He by forbearance had obtain'd renown,
And shewn a pious reverence for the laws:
But with his mother now is he involv'd
In equal guilt; for while he justly deem'd
That she was wicked, he himself became
More wicked by her murder. I this question
To thee, O Menelaus, will propose;
If in her husband's blood a wife imbrue
Her hands, and, to avenge his death, the son
Should slay the mother, and himself t' atone
For such a deed, by his own offspring fall,
What endless train of horrors would ensue!
In antient days our sires this wholesome law
Enacted, that, the man who had committed
An act of homicide, should ne'er appear
In public, or in social converse join;
By banishment they purg'd his crimes away,
But suffer'd not th' avenger to destroy him.
For otherwise must he, whose hands receive
The last defilement, ever be expos'd
To strict retaliation. I abhor
All impious women, and my daughter first
Who slew her Lord; yet on thy consort Helen
No praise can I bestow, nor will I parly
With her, nor thee applaud, who in the cause
Of that vile prostitute didst sail for Troy.
But with my utmost power will I assert
The laws prohibiting these murderous deeds
Of brutal force which ever prove the bane

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Of empires and of cities. For, O wretch,
How void of tender pity was your soul,
When your unhappy mother bar'd her breast,
And at your knees a suppliant fell! I saw not
Those horrors, yet my aged eyes o'erflow
With tears. One circumstance confirms the truth
Of what I say; detested by the Gods
For having slain your mother, you are doom'd
To wander stung by frenzy and by fear.
In matters which ourselves discern, what need
Of evidence? Be warn'd, O Menelaus,
Nor act in opposition to the Gods
By an attempt to succour him; permit
The citizens to stone him, or thou ne'er
To thy domains at Sparta shalt return.
Although my daughter in her death but suffer'd
What she deserv'd, she ought to have escap'd
The weapon of a son. In all things else
I justly may be styl'd a happy man,
But am, alas! most wretched in my daughters.

CHORUS.

Blest is the man, who in his children proves
So fortunate, as not to find them sources
Of great calamity.

ORESTES.

I dread to speak
Before thee, aged monarch, since my words
Must fill thy soul with grief; in that I slew
My mother, I am impious, but deserve
To be accounted pious, call the deed
I have committed by another name,
Just vengeance for my father: O retreat,
While I my cause am pleading, aged man,
Because thy presence interrupts my speech!
And I proceed: but now, by thy grey hairs,
Am I o'eraw'd. How ought I to have acted?
Weigh both my parents in an equal scale;

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My Sire begot, thy Daughter brought me forth:
As the till'd ground receives the scatter'd grain;
Without the father never could the child
Have had a being: hence I reason'd thus;
I to the cause of my existence ought
To furnish succour, rather than to her
Who only gave me nurture. But thy Daughter
(On whom I blush to waste the honour'd name
Of Mother) sought stol'n pleasures, and ascended
The bed of an adulterer: on myself,
Will the reproach I cast on her, rebound;
Yet speak I must. Within this palace lurk'd
Her secret husband, the accurst Ægisthus;
Him first I slew, nor sheath'd my vengeful sword
Till I had stain'd it with maternal gore;
The laws indeed I broke, but have exacted
A strict requital for my Father's death:
Yet since for this, 'gainst me thou hast pronounc'd
The threat of being ston'd; hear how I serv'd
All Greece; for if our women should attain
To such a pitch of boldness as to slay
Their Lords, and then fly with their bosoms bar'd,
Imploring pity, to their sons for refuge,
The murder of their husbands would be held
'Mongst them no fault, when any slight pretence
Occurs to give a sanction. By committing
This deed, which thou call'st horrid, I suppress'd
Such usage, and, with virtuous hatred fir'd
Against my mother, justly smote the Dame,
Who to her Lord was false, while he from home
In brazen arms was absent, mighty Chief
Of the whole Grecian land; nor undefil'd
Preserv'd her nuptial couch: yet, by the stings
Of conscience goaded for that foul offence,
No penalty imposing on herself,
Wreak'd bitter vengeance on her husband's head,
And, to avoid his just resentment, slew

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My Father. By the Gods, (tho' while I plead
The cause of blood, it misbecomes my tongue
To mention the immortal Powers) in silence
Had I conniv'd at the foul deeds my Mother
Committed, what would my slain Sire have done
To punish me? would not his hate have rous'd
The Furies? To avenge my Mother's death
If those remorseless Goddesses attend,
Would not his greater wrongs have claim'd their aid?
Thou, in begetting that abandon'd Daughter,
Didst ruin me, O venerable Man,
For of my Father in an evil hour
Reft by her daring lust, am I become
My Mother's murderer. Mark Ulysses' Wife;
Telemachus destroy'd not her; for she
Form'd with no second Lord the nuptial league,
Her first yet living: in her house remains
A spotless bridal couch. Observe how Phœbus,
Erecting in the center of the world
His fane, dispenses oracles to man
Which never can mislead, whose dread behests
With an implicit reverence all obey;
By him enjoin'd, my mother have I slain,
Condemn him then as impious, let him bleed,
He sinn'd, but I was guiltless. What remain'd
For me to do? Is not the God himself,
When I to him transfer the charge, sufficient
To expiate my offence? Where shall th' accus'd
Henceforth for shelter fly, if his command
Rescue me not from death? Forbear to charge me
With acting wrong, but rather say, that this
To me hath prov'd an inauspicious deed.
Blest is the life of him whose nuptial choice
Is wisely made; but he who to his arms
Takes an unworthy Consort, when at home,
And when abroad, is wretched.

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CHORUS.

In the hour
Of adverse fortune, ever near at hand
Is woman, to augment the woes of man,

TYNDARUS.

Since, flush'd with brutal arrogance you pay
No deference to my arguments, but make
Such harsh replies as wound my inmost soul,
The more my just resentment will you rouse,
Till I your death have compass'd; to the toils
Of an unwelcome office, the adorning
My daughter's tomb, which caus'd me to come hither,
Hence shall I add renown: for I will go
To the assembled Argives, and stir up
The citizens, already well dispos'd
Without reluctance to drag forth and stone
You and your sister, who deserves to die
Yet more than you, because she 'gainst your mother
Embitter'd you: she ever did instil
Into your ear words to provoke your hate,
Recounting dreams by Agamemnon sent,
And how the powers of hell beneath abhorr'd
Ægisthus' nuptials; on this theme she long
With rancor dwelt, till, kindled by her breath,
These mansions caught a flame yet more intense
Than that of Vulcan's forge. O Menelaus,
What I to thee profess, I will perform,
If thou the least regard to my resentment
Or our affinity would'st pay, that wretch
Protect not in defiance of the Gods:
Suffer the citizens with stones to slay him,
Or thou to Sparta never shalt return.
Remember the advice thou hear'st, nor choose
The impious for thy friends, and slight the good.
Lead me, my servants, from this loath'd abode.

[*Exit* TYNDARUS.

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ORESTES.

Depart, that what I have to say may reach
His hear without disturbance, and escape
Thy virulent old age. — But whither turn
Your feet, O Menelaus, with that air
Of anxious thought, 'twixt two opinions lost,
As if you enter'd on a road obscure
And intricate?

MENELAUS.

O leave me! many thoughts
In my own soul revolving, I yet know not
With whom I in this crisis ought to side.

ORESTES.

Form no conclusive judgement now; but, hearing
My arguments, on them your counsels ground.

MENELAUS.

Proceed in thy defence; 'twas wisely urg'd:
For silence, and a fluency of words,
Each in due season may the preference claim.

ORESTES.

Encourag'd thus, I speak: a long narration
Hath in my case th' advantage of a brief one,
And is by far more clear. On me bestow
None of your wealth, but make a due return
For bounties which on you my father shower'd:
I mean not to solicit you for gold,
But a possession to my soul most dear,
If you my life preserve. Do I exceed
The bounds of justice in this fond request?
From you, since I am wretched, I deserve
Somewhat beyond what I could justly claim:
For Agamemnon, my illustrious Sire,
Generous, not merely just, the host of Greece
Assembling, sail'd for Troy; the Chief himself
Transgress'd not, but came forward to exact
Atonement for the crime of him who stole
Your Consort. Sure a benefit like this

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Claims an equivalent. As for their friends
Friends ought to act, in battle he expos'd
For you his person to severest toils,
That you the ravish'd Helen might regain.
Then grant me back this favour in the stead
Of all which you at Ilion have receiv'd;
By danger unappall'd, one single day
Stand forth to save me, not ten tedious years.
To you my sister I resign, who bled
A spotless victim at the straits of Aulis;
Slay not Hermione to make atonement.
For you were born, on me while fortune lours
As at the present moment, to be blest
And merciful to me: but spare my life,
Both for the sake of my unhappy father,
And of my sister, who hath long remain'd
A virgin: since, by dying, I shall leave
Without an heir the mansions of my Sire.
You'll say; "that 'tis impossible to grant
What I request." But it behoves a friend,
His friends in their calamity to aid:
For when with bounteous hand propitious Fortune
Scatters her gifts, what need have we of friends?
Sufficient is the Goddess, if dispos'd
Her votaries to protect. To all the Greeks,
You seem to love your Consort; this I say not
T' insinuate myself by flattering arts
Into your favor: in her name I sue.
Wretch that I am, how low doth my distress
Force me to stoop! yet why should I be loth
To use entreaties, since for our whole house
I intercede! O Brother of my Sire,
Think the deceas'd amid the shades beneath
Now hears my voice, and, hov'ring o'er your head
A disembodied spirit, in such words
As I have done, accosts you. This I utter
Midst tears, and plaints, and woes, and crouch for life
Which all, and not I only, strive to save.

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CHORUS.

With him, I too, a female suppliant join
In these entreaties; succour the distrest,
For thou art able!

MENELAUS.

I for thee, Orestes,
A strong attachment feel, and would partake
In thy disastrous fortunes; for we ought
Thus to relieve our kinsman's woes, if Heaven
With strength endue us, midst impending death,
And cover'd with the slaughter of our foes.
Yet need I the assistance of the Gods
T' enable me: for in a bark unfurnish'd
With combatants I come, a wanderer harass'd
By toils unnumber'd; my surviving friends
Are but a feeble, and a scanty band:
In battle therefore cannot I subdue
Pelasgian Argos; but, if gentle words
Have any force, on them my hopes I ground.
How should the efforts of the weak prevail
Over the mighty? to indulge a wish
Like this, were madness. For when anger once
Finds entrance in the people's breasts, to tame
Their fury, is as hard as to extinguish
A conflagration; but if we give way
To their impetuous spirit, and observe
Our proper season, it perhaps will spend
Its vehemence, and when their heat subsides,
We easily may mold them to our will;
Great is their pity and their rage: to those
Who watch their opportunity, they prove
The best of friends. But I will go and strive
On Tyndarus and the City to prevail
To make a moderate use of power supreme.
For when its rudder's strain'd, beneath the waves
The vessel sinks; but if we loose the bands,
Again it rises. Courage unrestrain'd
To Jove himself is odious, and abhorr'd

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By all mankind; to save thee now from foes
Mightier than we, discretion and not strength
Is what I need, nor speak I thus at random.
Not by my prowess in th' embattled field,
As thou perhaps may'st deem, could I protect thee:
Nor were it easy for one single lance
Amidst the evils which around thee swarm,
To raise the victor's trophies; else I ne'er
Would have accosted, in a soothing strain
Th' inhabitants of Argos: but the wise
Are now constrain'd to be the slaves of fortune.

[*Exit* MENELAUS.

ORESTES.

O thou, in all things else devoid of merit,
Except to combat in a woman's cause,
Who hast no spirit to protect thy friends,
Dost thou forsake me with averted eyes?
Were Agamemnon's benefits in vain
Lavish'd on thee? in thy distress, my father,
Thou hadst no friend. Ah me! I am betray'd,
No hopes of any shelter now remain
Whither I may betake me, to escape
From Argos and from death: for I in him
As a secure asylum plac'd my trust.
But lo my Pylades, that best of men,
From Phocis hastening, greets my raptur'd eyes.
In our adversity the faithful friend
Is a more pleasing object than a calm
To mariners.

PYLADES, ORESTES, CHORUS.

PYLADES.

I, with the utmost speed,
Came through the city, when I heard and saw
The people were assembled to pass judgement
On you and on your sister, whom they seem
Resolv'd to slay immediately. How fare you,

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What are you doing, dearest comrade, friend,
And kinsman? for to me are you all these!

ORESTES.

In one short word, to sum up all my woes,
I perish.

PYLADES.

Me too, by the roots torn up,
In the same fate will you involve; for friends
Have but one common interest.

ORESTES.

Both to me,
And to my sister, Menelaus proves
Most base.

PYLADES.

How natural is it, that the husband
Of that abandon'd woman should be wicked!

ORESTES.

As well for me if he had ne'er arriv'd.

PYLADES.

But is he landed on these shores indeed?

ORESTES.

After a long delay: but I full soon
Perceiv'd that he was treacherous to his friends.

PYLADES.

And was the bark, in which he hither came,
Freighted with his vile wife?

ORESTES.

He brought not her,
But him she hither brings.

PYLADES.

Where is that Dame
Who slew so many Greeks?

ORESTES.

Here in my palace,
If I may venture yet to call it mine.

PYLADES.

What said you to the brother of your sire?

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ORESTES.

Him I conjur'd, not tamely to behold
Me and my sister by the people slain.

PYLADES.

Just heavens! what answer made he? tell me all.

ORESTES.

With that ungenerous caution he behav'd,
Which to their friends is practis'd by false friends.

PYLADES.

What plausible excuse could he allege?
When this I know, I shall have learnt the whole.

ORESTES.

The sire of those egregious females came.

PYLADES.

Tyndarus you mean; inflam'd perhaps with rage
'Gainst you for his slain daughter.

ORESTES.

Thou art right,
And such affinity did he prefer
To my sire's cause.

PYLADES.

Nor dar'd he to partake
Your toils, tho' present when you claim'd his aid?

ORESTES.

Unwont to launch the spear, this Chief displays
His courage only for a female prize.

PYLADES.

Your miseries are extreme, and fate ordains
That you shall die.

ORESTES.

We, for our mother's blood,
Must by the citizens be judg'd.

PYLADES.

What sentence
Will they pronounce? for greatly do I fear.

ORESTES.

Our death, or life: for, by one single word,

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The most important questions they decide.

PYLADES.

Leave these abodes, and with your sister fly.

ORESTES.

Perceive you not, by guards on every side,
How strictly we are watch'd?

PYLADES.

I saw the streets
Impervious, and beset with hostile spears.

ORESTES.

Here, like a city, by an host of foes
I closely am beleaguer'd.

PYLADES.

How I fare,
Now ask, for I too utterly am ruin'd.

ORESTES.

By whom? thro' the misfortune of my friend
Will my calamities become more grievous.

PYLADES.

My father Strophius from my native land
Hath banish'd me in anger.

ORESTES.

On a charge
Of some offence committed 'gainst himself,
Or 'gainst the public?

PYLADES.

For assisting you
To slay your mother, which he terms a deed
Most impious.

ORESTES.

Wretched kinsman! in my woes
You seem to be involv'd.

PYLADES.

I will not act
Like Menelaus: them I ought to bear.

ORESTES.

Have you no fear, lest Argos should deprive

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You too of life?

PYLADES.

No right to punish me
Hath Argos, for to Phocis I belong.

ORESTES.

The multitude is terrible, when led
By Chiefs unprincipled.

PYLADES.

But well dispos'd,
If virtuous men bear rule.

ORESTES.

Enough: my cause
In public am I now constrain'd to plead.

PYLADES.

By what resistless destiny impell'd?

ORESTES.

If I before the citizens should go,
And say ——

PYLADES.

You acted justly?

ORESTES.

In avenging
My father's death.

PYLADES.

I fear they would receive
This plea unfavourably.

ORESTES.

With terror smitten,
Or should I die in silence —

PYLADES.

This were mean
And dastardly.

ORESTES.

How then shall I proceed?

PYLADES.

Have you the smallest chance, if here you stay,
Of being sav'd?

ORESTES.

I have not.

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PYLADES.

If you go
Before the people, is there not some hope
Of gaining a deliverance from your woes?

ORESTES.

'Twere possible if fortune thus ordain.

PYLADES.

This is far better than continuing here.

ORESTES.

Shall I then go?

PYLADES.

You hence ensure, if doom'd
To die, a far more honourable death.

ORESTES.

My cause is just.

PYLADES.

O may it thus appear!

ORESTES.

Well have you spoken; so shall I escape
The imputation of a timid conduct.

PYLADES.

Rather than if you here remain'd.

ORESTES.

And some
Perhaps with pity may behold my fall.

PYLADES.

Great is the influence of your noble birth.

ORESTES.

My father's death resenting —

PYLADES.

All these facts
Before their eyes place in the strongest light.

ORESTES.

I must go forth; it ill becomes a man
To die ingloriously.

PYLADES.

Your bold resolve,
I praise.

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ORESTES.

Shall we disclose it to my sister?

PYLADES.

Name it not, I conjure you by the Gods.

ORESTES.

She might shed tears.

PYLADES.

Which were an evil omen.

ORESTES.

Twere evidently best then to be silent.

PYLADES.

You by delay will some advantage gain.

ORESTES.

One obstacle alone remains.

PYLADES.

Why start
Fresh scruples?

ORESTES.

Lest those Goddesses should seize me
With frenzy.

PYLADES.

On my fostering care rely.

ORESTES.

Loathsome it is to handle the diseas'd.

PYLADES.

Not so to me, while you I tend.

ORESTES.

Beware,
Lest you partake my frenzy.

PYLADES.

Such vain fears
I utterly discard.

ORESTES.

Will you not loiter?

PYLADES.

Great evils among friends from loitering rise.

ORESTES.

O faithful rudder of my steps, proceed.

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PYLADES.

Pleas'd with such charge.

ORESTES.

And to my father's tomb
Conduct me.

PYLADES.

For what purpose thither go?

ORESTES.

I would implore his tutelary aid.

PYLADES.

This were a proper homage.

ORESTES.

But not view
My mother's tomb.

PYLADES.

Because she was a foe.
But ere the Argivé synod by their votes
Condemn you, haste, and lean upon this arm
Your feeble body wasted with disease.
For I will lead you thro' the public streets
By shame unmov'd, and heedless of the crowd.
Of real friendship how could I give proof,
If I 'mid such calamities refus'd
To aid you?

ORESTES.

This it is to have true friends,
And not relations only: for the man,
By similarity of manners join'd,
Although he be an alien, is more worthy
Of our attachment than a thousand kinsmen.

[*Exeunt* ORESTES *and* PYLADES.

CHORUS.

ODE.

I.

Lost is the bliss, the rank supreme,
The valour, Atreus' son display'd
Thro' Greece, and on the banks of Simois' stream,
The victor's glittering trophies are decay'd:

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Of that ill-fated house the woes revive,
As, for the golden ram, when fate,
Steeling their breasts with ruthless hate,
Ordain'd the seed of Tantalus to strive;
Dire was the feast where royal infants bled;
A series hence ensued of impious deeds,
To slaughter past fresh slaughter still succeeds,
And their forefathers' guilt rests on the(5)childrens' head.

II.

The stroke tho' justice might demand,
In thee was it unjust to slay
A parent, and with unrelenting hand
Thy sword high waving in the solar ray,
To glory in the blood which thou hadst spilt.
In thy deliberate crime we find
Impiety with murder join'd,
And the distraction which attends on guilt.
For Tyndarus' wretched daughter did exclaim
Thro' fear of death; "Unholy is the deed
"Thou would'st commit: if thus thy mother bleed,
"Zeal for thy Sire will brand thee with perpetual shame."

(5) An objection to the term διωκουσιν Αἰακιδαις having been started by the Scholiast, who says nothing terrible had happened in Menelaus' house, and considers the Poet as saying of the two Brothers, what is applicable only to Agamemnon; Dr. Musgrave, in his notes, conjectures that we ought to read διωκουσι, divinis. But, in like manner as the Ταντάλιδαι, in this very stanza are Atreus and Thyestes, who were not the sons, but the grandsons of Tantalus; I cannot entertain the smallest doubt, that "the two Átrides" here spoken of are Orestes and Electra, the grandchildren, and not Agamemnon and Menelaus the sons of Atreus. The same mode of speaking in regard to far more remote descendants is by no means uncommon in the Greek language; and the reader will find upon consulting Herodotus, that Ἡρακλεῖδαι, which is the title to one of the Tragedies of Euripides, and there signifies "the children of Hercules," continued to be applied to their posterity for twenty-two generations, and through a series of more than five hundred years. Since I wrote the above, it occurs to me, that διὰν τὰν μάτραν Αἰακίδαν is the very expression used by the Iphigenia of our Author, when she speaks of herself and her brother Orestes, at the time of their endeavouring to effect their escape from Tauris.

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III.

Is there a being more forlorn on earth,
To whom are tears and pity due,
Rather than to the youth who drew
His ruthless blade 'gainst her who gave him birth
Since this exploit hath frenzy, direful pest,
Haunted the conscious breast
Of Agamemnon's son; for from the shades
Th' Eumenides hell's aweful maids
To sting the murderer rise;
Glaring roll his haggard eyes.
Inhuman wretch! who could his mother view
In vain for pity sue,
When she her tissued robe did tear,
And lay her throbbing bosom bare,
Yet aim the wound with unabated ire,
Determin'd to revenge his Sire.

ELECTRA, CHORUS.

ELECTRA.

Ye Damsels, hath the miserable Orestes,
O'ercome by that distraction which the Gods
Inflict, left these abodes?

CHORUS.

No; he is gone
Before the Argive people, to be tried
At their tribunal; they are now deciding
The question, whether ye shall live or die.

ELECTRA.

What hath he done? ah me! at whose persuasion?

CHORUS.

At that of Pylades. But lo with speed
A Messenger approaches to unfold
Your Brother's doom.

MESSENGER, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

MESSENGER.

O thou unhappy daughter
Of Agamemnon, our illustrious chief,

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Electra, royal virgin, lend an ear
To th' inauspicious message which I bring.

ELECTRA.

Alas! we are undone; your words betray you:
For it appears too plainly that you come
With evil tidings.

MESSENGER.

By a public vote
This day have the Pelasgians doom'd thy Brother,
And thee, O miserable Maid, to die.

ELECTRA.

My apprehensions are, alas! fulfill'd;
For thro' the fear of mischiefs yet to come
Oft have I shed th' involuntary tear.
But what debates, what speeches to the people
Of Argos, have induced them to pronounce
Sentence of death against us? say, old Man,
Have they resolv'd to stone, or to destroy
Me and my Brother by the lifted sword?

MESSENGER.

Hither I from the country came, and enter'd
The gates, solicitous to hear the doom
Of thee and of Orestes: for thy Sire
I ever lov'd, and in thy house was nurtur'd.
Poor as I am, yet an exalted sense
Of gratitude I to my friends retain.
The citizens, in motion, I beheld,
Repairing to their stations on that hill
Where 'tis recorded that the people first
In solemn council met, when Danaus answer'd
Ægyptus' charge. Observing what a crowd
Assembled; of some citizen unknown,
What new event hath happen'd in the realm
Of Argos, I enquir'd, if from our foes
Some haughty message this commotion rais'd?
He gave this answer: "See'st thou not Orestes
"Draw near, ordain'd to run the race of death?"

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A spectacle (which would to Heaven these eyes
Had never witness'd!) I beheld; thy Brother
By Pylades attended, with disease
Weak and unnerv'd; while with fraternal love
The comrade shar'd th' afflictions of his friend,
His sickness watch'd, and led him gently on.
No sooner with the citizens of Argos
Was the assembly fill'd, than there stood up
A Herald and gave notice; "Who will say
"Whether Orestes, who his Mother slew,
"Shall be acquitted or condemn'd?" Then rose
Talthybius first, the comrade of thy Sire
When Ilion fell; ambiguous were his words.
To those in power subservient, he extoll'd
Thy Father; but no praises on thy Brother
Bestowing, artfully conceal'd his malice;
Such precedent, he said, might 'stablish laws
Baleful to every Parent; and still cast
A smiling glance upon Ægisthus' friends.
Such are the race of Heralds, they direct
Their steps to the most prosperous, and their friend
Is he who in exalted station plac'd
Governs the city. Diomede the (6) King

(6) Though Diomede derived his title of King from Ætolia, a district of Greece, situated at a considerable distance from Argos, he never was in actual possession of that throne, but appears to have resided chiefly at Argos, till the time of his forming an establishment in Italy. Tydeus, banish'd from his own country by his father Oeneus, who was then seated on the throne of Ætolia, fled to Argos, and married Deipyle, one of Adrastus' daughters; following the banners of his father-in-law to the siege of Thebes, he was there slain, leaving his son Diomede, who was born at Argos, and was then an infant, under the protection of Adrastus. When Diomede was grown up to years of maturity, Apollodorus informs us, that he went from Argos to Ætolia, slew the sons of Agrius, who had depos'd and confined Oeneus his aged grandfather; and placed Andræmon, the husband of Oeneus' daughter, on the throne: he then returned to Argos, and was one of the heroes who avenged their father's deaths, and sacked Thebes. In Homer's account of the Grecian fleet in the second book of the Iliad, we find the Ætolians commanded by Thoas, the son of Andræmon, whom Diomede had placed on the throne,

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Replied, forbidding them t' imbrue their hands
Either in thine or in thy brother's blood:
But own'd, that by the exile of you both
They piously would act. His speech was heard
With murmurs of applause, and mingled blame.
He ceas'd, and there arose a man endued
With fluent speech and boldness unappall'd,
An Argive, who in Argos was not born,
But 'mongst its native denizens by force
Obtain'd a seat; in tumult he relied,
And an unletter'd confidence, nor wanted
The talent of persuasion to involve them
In any mischief. For whene'er the man,
Who joins to a perverted soul the gifts
Of eloquence, beguiles the public ear,
He to the city proves a grievous curse:
But they whose virtuous counsels never swerve
From wisdom's dictates, to the state are useful
Hereafter, tho' not instantly. The ruler
Of penetration should look well to this,
For both the man who utters and applauds
Such speech, is equally to blame. He said,
Ye should be ston'd, Orestes and thyself.

and Diomede acting under the auspices of Agamemnon, as general of the troops furnished by the city of Argos, subdivided from those of Mycene, which were led by Agamemnon himself. The dissolute conduct of Ægiale, Diomede's wife, who appears to have been daughter of Ægialeus, Adrastus' son, was so notorious during the absence of her husband at the siege of Troy, that

Nec tibi contingat matrona pudicior illâ
Quâ potuit Tydeus erubuisse nurû

is one of the imprecations in the Ibis of Ovid: and Diomede's resolution to leave Greece is ascribed to her infidelities. But as the followers, with whose assistance he founded a colony in the province of Apulia, where he erected a city called Arpi, according to Virgil, consisted of Argives; Vidimus o cives Diomeden, Argivaque castra, he may very reasonably be supposed to have dwelt at Argos during the space which intervened between his return from Troy and his sailing for Italy, and to have been one of those Argive citizens who sat in judgement upon Orestes: the next speaker is contrasted with him as no native of Argos.

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This language he by Tyndarus was suborn'd
To hold, that he might take your lives away.
He was oppos'd by one whose outward form
Is void of grace, but an intrepid warrior,
Who seldom from the city or the bar
Contracts pollution, to his own affairs
Attentive (to such men alone the land
Its safety owes) of apprehension quick,
Home to the purpose ever wont to speak,
Fam'd for simplicity and blameless manners;
Orestes, Agamemnon's son, he said,
Deserv'd a crown, because, resolv'd t' avenge
His Sire, he slew a vile and impious woman,
Whose conduct future heroes might prevent
From wielding arms, and issuing forth to battle
Far from their homes, if those they leave behind
Seduce their wives, and make the nuptial couch
A scene of infamy. With due applause
These sentiments each virtuous ear receiv'd.
Here ended the debate: but now advanc'd
Thy brother, and address'd them in these words;
" O ye possessors of the antient realm
" Of Inachus, erst call'd Pelasgians, next
" From Danaus nam'd, I to avenge your wrongs
" As well as those of my great father, slew
" My mother; for if women are allow'd
" To kill their lords, no longer can ye scape
" From death; or, if ye scape, ye to your wives
" Must yield a slavish deference, and subvert
" Those usages which decency enjoins.
" She who betray'd my father's bed, now lies
" A breathless corse: but sentence me to bleed,
" And ye the law 'gainst murder will annull;
" No man can breathe in safety, for no longer
" Will it be rare to find a Clytemnestra." (7)

(7) Mane Clytemnæstram mullus non vicus habebit.
Juv. Sat. 6. v. 656.

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Yet he the people could not move, tho' just
His reasoning seem'd; for on the crowd prevail'd
That wicked man who counsel'd them to slay
Thy brother and thee too. Scarce could Orestes
Persuade them not to stone you: he hath made
A promise, that you both by your own hands
Will on this day your lives together end.
From the assembly Pylades with tears
Conducts him, follow'd by his weeping friends,
Who pity him, and now to thee he comes
With ghastly countenance: prepare the sword,
Or twine the gliding noose, for thou must view
The sun no longer; thy illustrious birth
Hath been of no avail, nor Pythian Phœbus,
Who seated on his holy tripod gave
That dire response, for to the God thou ow'st
Thy ruin.

CHORUS.

Hapless virgin, on the ground,
How do you fix those eyes, which with a veil
Are cover'd, and in mournful silence stand,
As if your anguish would ere long burst forth
Into unbidden groans and bitter plaints.

ELECTRA.

ODE.

I.

To thee, Pelasgia, first my plaints I breathe,
Tear my pale cheeks, and smite my drooping head,
In youth's gay morn reluctant victim led
To the fair (8) Empress of the realms beneath.
Thou city which the Cyclops did adorn
Howl loudly, and bewail with (9) tresses shorn,

(8) Proserpine.

(9 Thus also Greg. Nazianzen, in some verses on the death of Martinianus:

Πασα δε Σικανη τε, και αμφι Πιμπλεια γαιης
Καρηνα: Muratori Anecdota Græca. p. 8.

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The house of Atreus' miserable fate,
To us its last poor relics doom'd to view
The sun no more, is tenfold pity due,
Because our Sire in arms erst rul'd each Grecian state.

II.

Now lost, for ever lost, is Pelops' race,
For wide domains and prosperous fortunes known,
But, by the envy of the gods o'erthrown,
Sentenc'd to bleed, and cover'd with disgrace.
Ye tribes of mortals, destin'd from your birth
To weep and toil while ye remain on earth,
See Fate with unexpected strides advance,
To sufferings past, fresh sufferings still succeed;
Since first his reign began hath Time decreed
That man's unstable life shall be the sport of chance.

III.

O that to yonder rock I could ascend,
Which hangs supported by a golden chain
Rivetted on Olympus' plain,
Still whirling round, huge (10) mass decreed t' impend
Midway 'twixt Heaven and earth,
That I with Tantalus, from whom my birth,
My inauspicious birth, I trace,
In sympathetic plaints may wail,
And dwell on the affecting tale
Of generations doom'd to view
Incessant woes: With thundering pace
Since the mares of Pelops flew,

(10) The Scholiast, and Dr. Musgrave in his notes on this passage, interpret βωλον as meaning "the sun;" and Euripides cited by the scholiasts in Apollonius Rhodius, l. iv. 498, is referred to by Henry Stephens in his Greek Thesaurus as calling the sun χρυσεαν βωλον; but χρυσειος is here an epithet to αλωσιν, and by the word βωλον which Dr. Musgrave's and a great variety of other Latin versions render glebam, Electra appears to me to be still speaking of a rock, or large mass of earth suspended in the midway air over the head of Tantalus, which is conformable to the account she has already given of her ancestor's sufferings at the beginning of this tragedy.

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While in his chariot Myrtilus he bore
To the steep beach of the Eubœan shore,
Him from Gerastia did the victor throw
Into the foaming tide below:
Hence that horrid curse we date
Arising from the son of Maia's hate,
Who caus'd the ram with golden fleece
Dire portent, amid th' increase
Of Atreus' flocks to mingle, when such fray
Ensued as caus'd the sun to steer
Retrogade a new career
From th' Hesperian regions to the east,
And the seven Pleiades by Jove
Were into distant orbits forc'd away;
Nor from that hour hath slaughter ceas'd,
In consequence of the detested feast
Known by Thyestes' name:
The Cretan Ærope's lascivious bed,
By nuptials fraught with equal shame
Hath been succeeded, and at length
Fate in her progress gathering strength,
Still to our house an unrelenting foe,
Hath pour'd destruction on my head,
And laid my noble father low.

CHORUS.

Behold your hapless brother, doom'd to die,
Moves slowly on, and Pylades most faithful
Of all mankind, e'en he whose firm attachment
Is equal to fraternal love, supports
Orestes and directs his languid steps.

ORESTES, PYLADES, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

ELECTRA.

Alas, my Brother, thee with groans I view
Plac'd on the verge of an untimely grave,
Just ere they kindle thy funereal pyre,
To gratify the powers of hell beneath.

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Ah me, once more! how have my senses wander'd,
While with these eyes I take a last fond look!

ORESTES.

Will you not yield in silence to what Heaven
Ordains, and lay aside those female plaints?
What tho' our doom be piteous, you are bound
The pressure of misfortunes to endure.

ELECTRA.

Yet how can I be mute? We are allow'd
To view Hyperion's radiant beams no more.

ORESTES.

Ah! do not kill me; wretched I am slain
Enough already by th' uplifted hands
Of Argos: but on these our present woes
No longer dwell.

ELECTRA.

O miserable Orestes,
Torn from the joys of youth by ruthless fate,
Just at the time thou should'st begin to live,
Thy life's short day is closing.

ORESTES.

By the Gods,
Unman me not, nor force my tears to stream
By wakening the remembrance of our griefs.

ELECTRA.

We both must die; nor can those groans be stifled,
For all mankind regret the loss of life.

ORESTES.

This is the day ordain'd; we must entwine
The gliding noose, or wield the sharpen'd sword.

ELECTRA.

Now slay me, O my Brother, lest some Argive
Should take my life away, and bring disgrace
On Agamemnon's progeny.

ORESTES.

Distain'd
Enough already with maternal gore,

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I will not be my sister's murderer: die
By your own hand in any mode you list.

ELECTRA.

It shall be so; nor will thy faithful sword
Desert me: but I wish to throw my arms
Around thy neck.

ORESTES.

Such unsubstantial pleasure
Enjoy, if an embrace afford delight
To those whose steps are hastening to the grave.

ELECTRA.

O most belov'd! O name for ever dear!
O thou whose soul is with thy sister's soul
Inseparably united!

ORESTES.

I shall catch
The soft contagion, eager to return
With these fond arms th' embraces you bestow.
For what is there which can excite a blush
In me who am so wretched? O my sister,
Whom to this throbbing breast e'en now I clasp;
Instead of children, and the bridal couch,
The only comfort that we wretches have,
Is in this conference to express our grief.

ELECTRA.

If this may be permitted, by one sword
Transpierc'd, ah, how shall we together fall,
How shall one tomb receive the fragrant chest
Of cedar with our mingled ashes fraught?

ORESTES.

This were indeed most grateful: but you see
How destitute we are of friends to lay us
In the same sepulchre.

ELECTRA.

Did Menelaus,
That vile betrayer of thy Sire, say nought

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In thy behalf, nor shew an anxious zeal
To save our lives?

ORESTES.

He would not even shew
His face, but fixing his insatiate hopes
Upon the sceptre, fear'd to save his friends.
But be it ours to act a generous part,
And die as Agamemnon's children ought.
I to ungrateful Argos will display
My courage, piercing with my sword my breast:
You it behoves to imitate my darings.
As a spectator o'er the bloody deed,
O Pylades, do thou preside, adorn
Our breathless corses, in my father's tomb
Together bury us; and now farewell,
For thou perceiv'st I to this great emprise
Am hastening.

PYLADES.

Hold: I now for the first time
Have a just cause to blame you, if you think
That I can be so mean as to survive you.

ORESTES.

But of what service is thy dying with me?

PYLADES.

Why do you ask this question? what can life
Avail without your friendship?

ORESTES.

Thou like me
Thy mother ne'er did'st slay.

PYLADES.

But I with you
Conspir'd, and therefore ought with you to suffer.

ORESTES.

Yield thyself to the mercy of thy Sire,
Nor die with me: for thou hast yet a country;
But I, alas! have none; thy father's house
Expects thee, and its coffers pil'd with gold.

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This miserable virgin thou hast lost,
Whom I to thee my honour'd friend engag'd;
But thou another consort mayst obtain
To bear a noble issue: for here ends
Th' affinity betwixt us. But, O name
For ever dear, thou best of friends, farewell:
Be transports thine which I can never taste;
For we of all enjoyments are bereft
By an untimely death.

PYLADES.

You much mistake
My purpose. Never may the fruitful earth,
Or bright etherial realm, receive my blood,
If I prove treacherous, and desert my friend
To purchase my own safety: for with you
I in the murder of your mother shar'd,
This will not I disown: and since my counsels
Encourag'd you to execute the deed
For which you suffer, I am bound to die
With you and with your sister: for I look
Upon that Virgin my affianc'd Bride
As tho' she were my Consort. What excuse
Could I allege, should I again behold
The shore where Delphi's holy turrets rise
That far-fam'd citadel of Phocis' realm,
If I, who while you prosper'd, was your friend,
Now you are wretched, am your friend no longer?
Such meanness I detest; our thoughts are fix'd
On the same object; but since die we must,
Let us consult together how t' involve
The perjur'd Menelaus in our woes.

ORESTES.

My dearest friend, with pleasure would I die
Could I see this.

PYLADES.

Obey my counsel now,
And for a while defer the fatal stroke,

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ORESTES.

To be reveng'd upon the man I hate,
I would defer.

PYLADES.

My friend, observe strict silence,
For I in women place but little trust.

ORESTES.

Fear nought from these: our friends alone are here.

PYLADES.

His Helen will we slay, a bitter source
Of grief to Menelaus.

ORESTES.

How? I'm ready,
If it be feasible.

PYLADES.

Our swords may pierce
Her bosom; for she lurks within your house.

ORESTES

Yea, and on all my forfeit treasures stamps
Her signet.

PYLADES.

But o'er these abodes no longer
Shall she preside, for Pluto's bridal couch
Awaits her.

ORESTES.

How? for by Barbarian slaves
She is accompanied.

PYLADES.

By whom? I fear
No Phrygian.

ORESTES.

From their childhood train'd to hold
The mirror, or in fragrant ointments skill'd.

PYLADES.

Fraught with extraneous luxuries from Troy
Is she come hither then?

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ORESTES.

Our Grecian roofs
Seem low to her ambition.

PYLADES.

The whole race
Of slaves, opposed to free-born might, are nothing.

ORESTES.

Could I accomplish such a great emprise
As this, I would not scruple twice to die.

PYLADES.

Nor I to aid thee.

ORESTES.

O point out the road,
And let thy actions justify the words
Which thou hast utter'd.

PYLADES.

We the doors will enter
Like men condemn'd to bleed.

ORESTES.

Thus far thy meaning
I trace, tho' ignorant of what's to follow.

PYLADES.

Our sufferings in her presence we will mourn.

ORESTES.

That she, altho' her heart rejoice, may weep

PYLADES.

While we shall be engag'd in carrying on
The same deception.

ORESTES.

How shall we then fight
This battle?

PYLADES.

We will carry swords conceal'd
Under our garments.

ORESTES.

But what slaughter first
Must there be made among her menial train?

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PYLADES.

Them we in different chambers will secure.

ORESTES.

And kill the first who speaks.

PYLADES.

We from events
Shall then learn how to act.

ORESTES.

Helen must bleed;
I understand the sign.

PYLADES.

Full well you know
My project; but now hear on what just motives
I found these counsels. Had we drawn the sword
Against a virtuous matron, such a deed
As this were a dishonourable murder:
But she will make atonement to all Greece,
To them whose fathers, them whose valiant sons
She hath destroy'd, and to the blooming Nymphs,
Reft of their Husbands, in the bridal hour
Whom she made widows; shouts shall pierce the air,
And kindled flames on every altar blaze,
While they with one assent invoke the Gods
To shower down plenteous blessings on our heads,
For having slain this execrable Woman.
After her death, no more shall you be styl'd
"The murderer of your Mother;" but that term
Of foul reproach for ever laid aside,
Obtain this better title; "He who smote
"Perfidious Helen, the detested cause
"Of many murders." Ill doth Menelaus
Deserve to prosper, while your father, you,
Your sister, and your mother bleed; (I wave
A theme which 'twere indecent to discuss,)
And govern your hereditary realm,
Since he regain'd his consort by the aid
Of Agamemnon's spear: perdition seize me

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If I 'gainst her lift not the vengeful sword:
Should we be frustrated in our design
Of slaying Helen; let us fire this house
And perish: for we will not lose the whole
Of our high aims, but purchase lasting fame,
Whether we nobly die, or live with glory.

CHORUS.

Such Tyndarus' Daughter, who such foul reproach
Hath cast on her whole sex, deserves the hate
Of every woman.

ORESTES.

There is nought on earth
More precious than the friend who may be trusted,
Nor gold, nor empire; multitudes compar'd
With such a friend are worthless: thou didst first
Devise Ægisthus' bane, and stand beside me
In all my dangers: now, on those I hate
An ample vengeance thou again bestow'st,
Scorning to leave me in this fatal hour.
Yet will I cease thy merits to extol,
For most offensive is immoderate praise,
But I, who must inevitably bleed,
Some punishment would on my foes inflict,
Then shall I die content; I would requite
The villains who betray'd me, with destruction,
And those who made me wretched, cause to groan.
For I am Agamemnon's son; my Sire
Was chosen by the public voice to rule
O'er Greece, no tyrant was the generous Chief,
Although by the immortal Gods endued
With more than human might; nor will I shame
His memory by expiring like a slave,
But yield up my last breath with free-born spirit,
On Menelaus wreaking just revenge.
What happiness were ours could we attain
This one great object, an escape from death,
By some event for which I hardly dare

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To hope; and slay, not perish; such my prayer.
The wish at least which I have form'd is sweet,
And I, with words soon lost in air, delight
My soul on easy terms.

ELECTRA.

Methinks, O Brother,
I an expedient have devis'd, to save
Thy life, with that of Pylades, and mine.

ORESTES.

The counsels you have utter'd, by some God
Are dictated; but tell me where to meet
With such resource: for well I know your soul
Is most sagacious.

ELECTRA.

Now give ear, O Brother,
And to my words, O Pylades, attend.

ORESTES.

Speak: for some pleasure doth result from talking
Of bliss ideal.

ELECTRA.

Know'st thou Helen's Daughter?
I ask a question thou with ease canst solve.

ORESTES.

Hermione, I know, who by my mother
Was nurtur'd.

ELECTRA.

Hence to Clytemnestra's tomb
She went.

ORESTES.

With what design? is this a ground
For any hope?

ELECTRA.

Over the grave to pour
Libations in her mother's stead.

ORESTES.

Why speak
Of this, as tho' it might conduce to save us?

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ELECTRA.

Her for an hostage seize when she returns.

ORESTES.

How can this measure remedy the ills
Of us three friends?

ELECTRA.

When Helen is no more,
Should Menelaus strive to punish thee,
Or Pylades, or me, (for we are all
Made one by friendship) tell him thou wilt slay
Hermione, and to the virgin's neck
Point thy drawn sword. But, if he spare thy life,
Requesting that his daughter may not die,
When Helen weltering in her blood he views,
Surrender up the damsel to her Sire;
But, if unable to restrain his passion,
He seeks to kill thee, in the (11) virgin's breast
Thy weapon plunge; but he, at the first onset
Tho' violent, ere long, I deem, will calm;
For he is equally devoid of firmness
And enterprising courage: on this ground
I build our safety. Here concludes my speech.

ORESTES.

O you, who with a manly soul possess
A form adorn'd by every female grace,
How much more worthy are you to extend
Your life's short span, than perish thus untimely.
Thee fate hath doom'd, O Pylades, to lose
A Bride with whom thou might'st have pass'd thy days
In blissful union.

(11) Robertellus, in his Commentary on Aristotle's Poetics, noticing the distinction made in one of the Greek arguments prefixed to this Tragedy, that it is extremely defective in point of morality, all the characters being bad ones except Pylades, observes that in his opinion Pylades is also a vicious character, for *advising* that both Hermione and Helen should be put to death, p. 171, Flor. ap. Torrent. 1548: for though he does not make the proposal he evidently assents to it.

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PYLADES.

Grant it, O ye Gods!
And with auspicious hymeneal pomp
Th' exulting Phocian city may she reach.

ORESTES.

But when will fair Hermione return
To these abodes? For you in all beside
Have wisely spoken, if we here succeed,
And seize this child of an accursed Sire.

ELECTRA.

She must be near the palace, from the length
Of time, I judge, since she departed hence.

ORESTES.

'Tis well: before yon massive portals take
Your station, O my Sister, and there wait
Th' arrival of the Virgin: but observe
If, ere we have slain Helen, to this house
Some comrade, or the Brother of my Sire,
Come to prevent us; and to us within
Give the alarm by thundering at the gate,
Or calling with loud voice. But let us enter,
Arm'd with drawn swords, prepar'd for desperate conflict,
O Pylades, for thou with me partak'st
All dangers. — O my Father, whose abode
Is in the caverns of eternal night,
Thy son Orestes calls thee, come and succour
Those who thy aid implore: for in thy cause,
Wretch that I am, unjustly I endure
These woes, and by thy Brother am betray'd,
Tho' what I did, by justice was enjoin'd:
His Wife am I resolv'd to seize and slay;
Do thou assist us in our bold emprise,

ELECTRA.

Come then, my Sire, if in the realms beneath
Thou hear thy children's call, who for thy sake
Are doom'd to bleed.

PYLADES.

Illustrious Agamemnon,

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Thou kinsman of my Father, to my prayers
O listen and arise to save thy children.

ORESTES.

I smote my mother.

PYLADES.

I the falchion drew.

ELECTRA.

But I encourag'd, I remov'd thy fear.

ORESTES.

Thy murder, O my Father, I aveng'd.

ELECTRA.

Nor yet by me wert thou betray'd.

PYLADES.

Then hear
These plaints, and save thy children.

ORESTES.

Streaming tears
To thee for my libations I present.

ELECTRA.

These lamentations I,

PYLADES.

Cease; let us rouse
To action: for he hears us, if prayers enter
Those subterraneous regions. But do thou,
O Jove, our great Progenitor, thou God
Of Justice, grant success in this emprise
To Him and Me, and Her: for to three friends
Join'd in one conflict, the same fate is due,
To live together, or together die.

[*Exeunt* ORESTES *and* PYLADES.

ELECTRA.

Dear virgins of Mycene, who possess
The most distinguish'd station in the realm
Of fam'd Pelasgian Argos —

CHORUS.

What strange words,
O Princess, dost thou utter? For to thee

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Still in this city is such honour paid.

ELECTRA.

Some in this avenue your stations take;
And others at a different path, to guard
The palace.

CHORUS.

Wherefore giv'st thou this command?
Inform us, dearest maid.

ELECTRA.

I with dismay
Am seiz'd, lest some one standing near the gate,
While they are slaying Helen, should devise
'Gainst us fresh mischiefs.

SEMICHORUS I.

Let us go with speed;
I will observe this road which Phœbus gilds
With orient beams.

SEMICHORUS II.

I that which fronts the west.

ELECTRA.

Obliquely cast swift glances, turn your eyes
Now here, now there, and every moment look
A different way.

CHORUS.

Thy mandates we observe.

ELECTRA.

Now roll around those piercing orbs of sight,
And part the tresses which their lids o'erhang.

SEMICHORUS I.

But lo, advancing o'er the beaten path,
What hind to these abodes directs his way?

ELECTRA.

We are undone, my friends, if to our foes
He the two lions instantly point out
Who in the palace lurk with falchions arm'd.

SEMICHORUS II.

Dismiss thy terrors: vacant is the path

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Which by some hostile stranger, O my friend,
Thou dost think occupied.

ELECTRA.

But doth your station
Remain secure? O publish the glad tidings
Before that front of Argos' regal dome,
If yet the space be void.

SEMICHORUS II.

All here goes right:
But look around you, for to us there comes
None of the race of Danaus.

SEMICHORUS I.

Our reports
Concur; nor in this quarter are there found
Any tumultuous citizens.

ELECTRA.

My voice
Now will I raise, and thro' the portals send —
Why thus delay, O ye who are within
The palace, while all's quiet, to imbrue
Your falchions in the victim's gore?— They hear not.
Ah, wretched me! hath then her beauty blunted
The edge of their keen swords? In mail array'd,
Perhaps some Argive with impetuous step
Comes to her rescue. Be more watchful now;
You must not sit inactive, but look round
On this side and on that.

CHORUS.

We change our posture,
And watch the various paths on every side.

HELEN. *(within.)*

Pelasgian Argos, I am basely slain!

ELECTRA.

Heard ye? They execute with bloody hand
Their purpose. These, I guess, are Helen's shrieks.

CHORUS.

Fail not, O thou eternal might of Jove,

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To succour my adventurous friends!

HELEN *(within.)*

I die,
O Menelaus! thou art near at hand,
Yet com'st not to my aid.

ELECTRA.

Kill, smite, destroy;
Wielding your falchions with unwearied arm
Against the dame who left her aged Sire,
Who left her royal husband, and hath caus'd
Unnumber'd Greeks in battle to expire
Beside the stream, where tears on tears were shed,
Transfix'd with hostile javelins on the banks
Of fam'd Scamander.

CHORUS.

Silence! for I heard
The sound of one advancing in the path
Which to this mansion leads.

ELECTRA.

My dearest friends,
Hermione amidst the slaughter comes:
Let us forbear to speak; for she advances,
Ready to fall into the net, and prove,
If I can take her, a most glorious prize.
Once more compose your looks, nor by a change
In your complexion make our purpose known.
I o'er these eyes will also cast a gloom,
As tho' I were not privy to the deed.

HERMIONE, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

ELECTRA.

Hast thou, O virgin, deck'd with flowery wreaths
The tomb of Clytemnestra, and pour'd forth
Libations to her shade?

HERMIONE.

I have perform'd
Each expiatory rite: but some strange fear

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Seizes my bosom; for I heard the shrieks
Of one within, while yet I from the palace
Was distant far.

ELECTRA.

What mean'st thou? such events
Have happen'd as deserve these groans.

HERMIONE.

Use words
Of better omen. But what recent tidings
Would you communicate?

ELECTRA.

This land hath sentenc'd
Me and Orestes to immediate death.

HERMIONE.

Just heaven forbid! for ye are both my kindred.

ELECTRA.

Thus 'tis ordain'd: we in the galling yoke
Of fate are bound.

HERMIONE.

And did the clamorous voice
I heard within the palace, hence arise?

ELECTRA.

A Suppliant falls at Helen's knees, and sues
Aloud for pity.

HERMIONE.

Who? I have no knowledge
Of what hath pass'd, unless you will inform me.

ELECTRA.

The miserable Orestes, he intreats
That she from death would save both him and me.

HERMIONE.

A cause too just for th' inauspicious sounds
Which thro' this house are heard.

ELECTRA.

Than these, what plaints
Can be more urgent? But, O come and join
Thy friends in their intreaties, bending low

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Before thy Mother, that most happy dame,
That Menelaus will not see us die.
But O do thou, who by my Mother's care
Wert nurtur'd, pity and relieve our woes.
Enter this contest; I will lead the way:
For all our safety rests on thee alone.

HERMIONE.

Lo! to the threshold I direct my step:
Far as on me depends, be safety yours.

[*Exit* HERMIONE.

ELECTRA.

O ye, my friends, who in the palace stand
With falchions arm'd, will ye not seize your prey?

HERMIONE *(within.)*

Ah me! but who are these whom I behold?

ORESTES *(within.)*

Thou must be silent: for thou hither com'st
Us to preserve, whate'er thyself betide.

ELECTRA.

Hold, hold her fast, and, aiming at her neck
Your swords, delay the stroke, that Menelaus
May see her danger; as his crimes deserve,
Since now he suffers, having met with men,
Not Phrygian dastards. A tumultuous din,
And clamorous shout, before these mansions raise,
To drown the cries of slaughter, O my friends,
Lest Argos catch th' alarm, and to the aid
Of Helen rush, ere I her weltering corse
Can with these eyes behold, or by some servant
The tidings hear: for I already know
Her danger, but not whether she be slain.

[*Exit* ELECTRA.

CHORUS.

With justice hath the vengeance of the Gods
O'ertaken faithless Helen: for all Greece
With tears she fill'd, thro' that accursed swain
Of Ida, Paris, who from Sparta's coast

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To distant Ilion bore the beauteous dame.
But O be silent; for the palace gates
Are with loud sound unbarr'd, and thence comes forth
One of the Phrygian captives; we by him
May be inform'd of what hath pass'd within.

PHYRGIAN, CHORUS.

PHYRGIAN.

I, from the sword of Argos and from death,
In Phrygian sandals, thro' apartments scap'd,
Whose sculptur'd roofs with cedar are adorn'd,
And Doric triglyphs, A strange land, alas!
Is this to the Barbaric fugitive.
Ye foreign Dames, ah, whither shall I go
For refuge, to the blue etherial fields,
Or waves, which Ocean horned monarch pours
From his exhaustless source, with giant arms
This nether world encircling?

CHORUS.

What hath happen'd,
Say, O thou slave of Helen, thou who com'st
From Ida?

PHRYGIAN.

Ilion, Ilion, O thou city
Of Phrygia, for thy fruitful soil renown'd!
Thou sacred mount of Ida, thy destruction
How do I wail, these mournful strains attuning
With a barbaric voice! Thou to the eyes
Of her the Swan begot, thy ruin ow'st,
To Leda's daughter, execrable Helen,
That baneful fiend, who overthrew the towers
Erected by Apollo's skilful hand.
Hapless Dardania! O thou martial realm,
Erst in an evil hour didst thou produce
Jove's minion, Ganymede.

CHORUS.

To us relate,

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In terms explicit, all that hath been done
Within the Palace: for what erst I knew not,
I now can guess.

PHRYGIAN.

Those (12) words, those plaintive words,
Which still commence the sad funereal dirge,
Barbarian tribes, with Asiatic voice,
And piteous wailings utter, when the blood
Of mighty kings, slain by the sword, to sate
Remorseless Pluto, on the ground is pour'd.
Into the palace (if I must repeat
Each circumstance) two Grecian lions rush'd:
The father of the first of these was call'd
The (13) Mighty Chief, his comrade, Strophius' Son,
A man in every mischievous device
Skill'd; like Ulysses, silently deceitful,
But firm in his attachment to his friends;
A dauntless combatant, in martial wiles
Expert, a serpent who still thirsts for gore.
Curse on the seeming mildness he assum'd,

(12) Frequently as the expression in the original Αἰλινον, which King and Dr. Musgrave render "Ælinon," occurs in the Greek Poets, I never recollect to have met with it translated into English. Ancient writers vary in their accounts both of the birth and death of Linus. Diodorus Siculus speaks of him as the first Greek who invented rhyme and melody, and mentions his attempting to teach Hercules to play on the lyre, but with such ill success as provok'd him to strike his pupil, who return'd the blow and kill'd his master with the instrument on which he was practising. Conon calls Apollo the father, and Psamathè the mother of Linus, and informs us, that while he was yet an infant, he was accidentally torn to pieces by shepherds' dogs: but Pausanias says it is generally reported that Amphimarus, son of Neptune, was his father, and the Muse Urania his Mother, and adds, that he was killed by Apollo, whom he contended with in song. He represents the lamentations for the death of Linus as having reached even the Barbarian nations; and makes particular mention, as also does Herodotus, of elegiac verses among the Ægyptians distinguished by his name. This general celebrity of Linus sufficiently obviates any objection against Euripides, for putting the term Αἰλινον into the mouth of this Phrygian slave.

(13) Agamemnon.

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The forethought of that villain! they together
Entering the palace, both approach'd the throne
Of her whom Paris, our fam'd archer, wedded,
Their eyes were drench'd in tears, low on the ground
Apart they sat to guard on either side
The royal dame, and clung with suppliant hands
Round Helen's knees: but to their Queen with speed
The Phrygian servants ran, and spoke their thoughts
Each to his fellow, dreading vile deceit:
Some deem'd this was not fraud: but others saw
Full clearly, that the serpent who had slain
His Mother, in inextricable snares
Wish'd to entangle the surviving Daughter
Of Tyndarus.

CHORUS.

At that moment where wert thou?
By terror seiz'd hadst thou already fled?

PHRYGIAN.

After our Phrygian usages I stood
Before the beauteous Helen, o'er whose hair
And crimson cheeks I with a fan diffus'd
The cooling air; thus are Barbaric Queens
Attended: she meantime the lengthen'd thread
With her swift fingers from the distaff roll'd,
That Ilion's spoils, for Clytemnestra's tomb,
A purple robe, fit offering, might afford.
But to the Spartan fair, Orestes said;
"Daughter of Jove, descending from thy throne,
"Visit with me that hallow'd spot, where stands
"An altar rear'd in antient days by Pelops
"My ancestor, you there shall know my schemes."
He led her on; she follow'd, having form'd
No sad presage of what would soon ensue:
But his vile Phocian friend in other tasks
Engag'd, then cried; "Why will ye not depart?
"But Phrygians ever harbour needless fears."
He then dispersing thro' this vast abode

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Our troop, or in the stalls where coursers feed,
Or chambers near the vestibule, confin'd us;
Placing some here, some there, all far remov'd
From our unhappy Mistress.

CHORUS.

What disaster
Follow'd this prelude?

PHRYGIAN.

Queen of Ida's Mount
Rhea, thou mighty Mother, what dire scenes
Of crimson slaughter, and what impious deeds
Have these astonish'd eyes alas beheld
Within the palace! when their hidden swords
They from beneath their purple robes had drawn,
Each cast his eyes around, to see that none
Were there to aid her; then like ruthless boars
Both rushing on a woman, they exclaim'd,
" Death, death must be thy portion, thy base Lord
" Is he who causes thee to forfeit life,
" By yielding up his Brother's Son to bleed
" At Argos." But she shriek'd, " Ah me!" and smote
With snowy arm her breast and head, then strove
To scape in golden sandals: but Orestes,
Twining his hand around her hair, advanc'd
With furious stride, and bending back her head
Over her shoulder, rais'd his sword on high
To plunge it in her throat.

CHORUS.

Where was her band
Of menial Phrygians? came ye to her aid?

PHRYGIAN.

We shouted, and with levers bursting open
The doors of our captivity, rush'd forth
From every distant quarter of the house
To her assistance; in his hands this bore
A stone, a javelin that, a third was arm'd
With a drawn sword: but Pylades advanc'd

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Against us, undismay'd as Phrygian Hector,
Or Ajax with his triple-crested helm,
Whom in the gates of Priam I beheld.
Our swords to theirs opposing, soon we found
How far inferior in th' embattled field
Are we to Grecian warriors. One escap'd,
Another was depriv'd of life, here grovel'd
The wounded, there t' avert th' impending stroke
The suppliant crouch'd, while some of us found shelter
In an obscure recess; but on the ground
Drench'd with their gore the breathless corses lay,
And some were yet to fall, some fall'n already.
But to the palace in that moment came
Hermione, just as the ruthless blade
Was lifted to destroy her wretched Mother;
When (tho' they bore no thyrsus) with a speed
Equal to that of Bacchus' frantic train,
They, as a hunter seizes on his prey,
The virgin caught, and made another effort
Jove's Daughter to have slain; but thro' the palace
She from those inner chambers 'scap'd unseen,
O Jove, thou foodful Earth, thou radiant Sun,
And all-concealing Night, thro' (14) drugs endued
With wondrous virtue, thro' magicians' wiles,
Or stolen away by the celestial Powers,

(14) The Poet is here supposed by his Scholiast to allude to the magic drugs Helen obtained in Ægypt, according to Homer, Odyss. L. iv. ver. 229.

Ταια Διος Θυγατηρ εχε φαρμακα μειλιχα·
Βηλα, τα οι Πολυδαμνα πορεν Θωνος παρακοιτις,
Αρηγονος εν Πλειστω φερει ζειδωρος αρουρα
Φαρμακα, πολλα μεν ηθλα μεμιγμενα πολλα δε λυγρα.

These Drugs, so friendly to the joys of life,
Bright Helen learn'd from Thone's imperial wife,
Who sway'd the sceptre where prolific Nile,
With various simples cloathes the fatten'd soil.
With wholesome herbage mix'd, the direful bane
Of vegetable venom taints the plain. POPE.

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But what ensued I know not, for unseen
I thro' the portal fled. Unnumber'd toils
Hath Menelaus suffer'd, and in vain
From Troy recover'd his unhappy Wife.

CHORUS.

E'en in a moment, from these fresh events
A fresh event ensues: for lifting high
His vengeful sword, before these doors I see
Orestes marching with impetuous step.

ORESTES, PHRYGIAN, CHORUS.

ORESTES.

Where is that slave, who from the palace fled,
And scap'd my falchion?

PHRYGIAN.

You, O King, I worship,
Prostrate on earth, in our Barbaric guise.

ORESTES.

Not Ilion's realm, but Argos is the scene
Of these transactions.

PHRYGIAN.

In all places, life
Is far more grateful to the wise than death.

ORESTES.

That Menelaus to thy aid might come,
Didst thou cry out?

PHRYGIAN.

To fight in your behalf
Am I resolv'd; for you deserve our love.

ORESTES.

Was Tyndarus' Daughter Helen justly slain?

PHRYGIAN.

Most justly. Had she had three lives, she thrice
Deserv'd to die.

ORESTES.

Thou flatter'st with thy tongue
Thro' fear, tho' in thy heart thou think not thus.

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PHRYGIAN.

Why not? Her crimes have utterly destroy'd
Both Greece and Phrygia?

ORESTES.

Swear, or I will slay thee,
Thou speak'st not thus my favour to obtain.

PHRYGIAN.

I by my life have sworn, and such an oath
Ne'er can I violate.

ORESTES.

Did every Phrygian
At Troy thus dread the sword?

PHRYGIAN.

Remove the point,
For at my breast directed it portends
Dire slaughter.

ORESTES.

Fear'st thou, lest thou should'st be chang'd
Into a stone like those who view the Gorgon?

PHRYGIAN.

Death's what alarms me; of the Gorgon's head
I nothing know.

ORESTES.

Dost thou, an abject slave,
Fear death, which would release thee from thy woes?

PHRYGIAN.

All men, tho' slaves, with pleasure view the sun.

ORESTES.

Well spoken; thee thy prudence saves; but go
Into the palace.

PHRYGIAN.

Will you then forbear
To slay me?

ORESTES.

I release you.

PHRYGIAN.

By that word

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You comfort me.

ORESTES.

My purpose still may change.

PHRYGIAN.

Again you speak amiss.

ORESTES.

Thou art a fool
If thou believ'st I with thy gore would stain
My sword: for thou deserv'st not to be class'd
With women, or with men. But to prevent
Thy cries, I from the palace issued forth;
Else would all Argos soon have heard thy voice
And mutinied. I fear not with this sword
T' encounter Menelaus; let him come
Exulting in those auburn locks that wave
Over his shoulders: but against this house
If the collected citizens he lead,
Revenging Helen's death, and will not spare
My Sister, me, and Pylades, who aided
In our emprise, he shall behold his Daughter
Join'd with his Consort, each a breathless corse.

[*Exeunt* ORESTES *and* PHRYGIAN.

CHORUS.

Again, O adverse Fortune, is the house
Of Atreus' Sons involv'd in fresh distress.

SEMICHORUS I.

What shall we do? these tidings thro' the city
Proclaim; or will it be more safe to wait
In silence, O my friends?

SEMICHORUS II.

Before these doors,
See how that smoke ascending to the skies
Anticipates our tidings.

SEMICHORUS I.

They have kindled
Torches of pine, as if resolv'd to fire
The roofs of Tantalus' devoted race,

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Nor yet desist they from their murderous deeds.
To mortals Jove dispenseth at his will
Future events: but some resistless Power
This house hath smitten, aided by the Fiends;
Here streams abundant gore, since from the car
Myrtilus was thrown headlong.

SEMICHORUS II.

But these eyes
Discern fierce Menelaus, who with speed
The royal dome approaches: he no doubt,
By fame hath been appris'd of this event
Which hath just happen'd. Therefore barring fast
The massive gates, ye progeny of Atreus
Who are within, will ye not stop his entrance?
The man whom prosperous fortunes still attend
Is terrible to those who are as wretched
As thou, Orestes, in this present hour.

MENELAUS, CHORUS.

ORESTES, PYLADES, *and* HERMIONE, *appear on a Tower above.*

MENELAUS.

Hearing the horrid and audacious deeds,
Two lions, for I cannot call them men,
Have dar'd to perpetrate, I hither come.
For I am told my Consort was not slain,
But vanish'd from all eyes; this groundless tale
One whom his fear bewilder'd, hath to me
Related: but such stratagems are forg'd
With sportive cruelty, by those who murder'd
Their Mother. Ope the doors, my servants, force
Their hinges, that at least I may set free
My Daughter from the hands of bloody men,
And the remains of my unhappy Wife
Receive, with whom her murderers by this arm
Shall perish.

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ORESTES.

Ho! touch not those bars; I call
To thee, O Menelaus, who art strong
In pride alone; or from this antient roof
I will disjoin the sculptur'd pinnacle,
And crush thy perjur'd head. With massive bars
Against thy rage these doors are fortified,
Thou canst not force an entrance.

MENELAUS.

Ha! what mean
The blazing torches with these eyes behold?
Why stand they on the summit of the palace,
Secure from danger, while the sword impends
Over my Daughter's neck.

ORESTES.

Art thou dispos'd
To question us, or listen to my words?

MENELAUS.

I would avoid such option: but it seems
Hear you I must.

ORESTES.

Know then I am resolv'd
To slay thy Daughter.

MENELAUS.

Having murder'd Helen,
Fresh slaughter to that slaughter will you add?

ORESTES.

Ah! would to Heaven, ere Helen by the Gods
Was stolen away, this sword had pierc'd her heart!

MENELAUS.

Do you deny the bloody deed, and forge
This tale but to insult me?

ORESTES.

'Tis with grief
That I deny: while earnestly I wish—

MENELAUS.

What mean you? for these words alarm my soul.

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ORESTES.

That I had plung'd that Fiend, the bane of Greece,
Beneath the shades of hell.

MENELAUS.

My Consort's body
Restore, that I may lodge it in the tomb.

ORESTES.

Apply to Heaven: thy Daughter too I'll slay.

MENELAUS.

Still with fresh murders reek th' accursed hand
Of him who smote his Mother.

ORESTES.

In avenging
My Father, whom thou didst betray, and leave
His death unpunish'd.

MENELAUS.

Is it not enough
That you are sprinkled with her Mother's blood?

ORESTES.

I never can be wearied with destroying
Vile women.

MENELAUS.

Wert thou too, O Pylades,
Concern'd in slaying her?

ORESTES.

He by his silence
Asserts the fact: and if I speak for both,
'Twill be sufficient.

MENELAUS.

But ye shall not triumph,
Unless endued with wings to speed your flight.

ORESTES.

Flight we disdain, but are resolv'd to fire
These mansions.

MENELAUS.

Would you then lay waste th' abodes
Of your forefathers?

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ORESTES.

Lest thou should'st possess them:
And o'er the flames Hermione shall bleed.

MENELAUS.

Strike: soon as you have slain her, you shall suffer
As you deserve.

ORESTES.

I will.

MENELAUS.

Yet, ah forbear.

ORESTES.

In silence now endure those grievous ills
Which thou hast merited.

MENELAUS.

Can it be just
That you should live?

ORESTES.

Yea, and command a realm.

MENELAUS.

What realm?

ORESTES.

My heritage, this wide domain,
Pelasgian Argos.

MENELAUS.

Are you qualified
To touch the sacred lustral vase?

ORESTES.

Why not?

MENELAUS.

And ere the battle joins present your victims?

ORESTES.

Canst thou perform such holy rite?

MENELAUS.

My hands
Are pure and undefil'd.

ORESTES.

Not so thy heart.

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MENELAUS.

Who will converse with you?

ORESTES.

The man who loves
His Sire.

MENELAUS.

But as for him, who doth revere
His Mother?

ORESTES.

He is blest.

MENELAUS.

So are not you.

ORESTES.

Because I like not those abandon'd Dames.

MENELAUS.

That weapon from my Daughter's breast remove.

ORESTES.

Thou art deceiv'd.

MENELAUS.

Will you then take away
The virgin's life?

ORESTES.

Here thy delusion ends.

MENELAUS.

Ah me! how shall I act?

ORESTES.

Go and persuade
The Argives.

MENELAUS.

To do what?

ORESTES.

Implore the city
To spare our lives.

MENELAUS.

My Daughter else must bleed?

ORESTES.

Such is the state of things.

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MENELAUS.

O wretched Helen!

ORESTES.

Am not I wretched too?

MENELAUS.

Have I from Phrygia
Borne her to fall a victim by your hand?

ORESTES.

Would to the Gods thou had'st!

MENELAUS.

After enduring
Unnumber'd toils?

ORESTES.

No dangers in my cause
Didst thou endure.

MENELAUS.

Most grievous are my woes.

ORESTES.

Thou didst refuse to aid me in distress.

MENELAUS.

You've caught me.

ORESTES.

Thy own wickedness hath caught thee.
But ho, Electra, so intense a fire
Kindle beneath as may consume the palace:
And you, O Pylades, of all my friends
Most stedfast, burn these roofs.

MENELAUS.

Thou land of Danaus,
And ye inhabitants of Argos fam'd
For generous steeds, why will ye not in arms
Rush forth to aid me? for this miscreant wars
'Gainst our whole city, to preserve his life,
Tho' he with impious hand hath slain his Mother.

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APOLLO, MENELAUS, CHORUS.

ORESTES, PYLADES, *and* HERMIONE, *appear above on a Tower.*

APOLLO.

O Menelaus, lay thy rage aside,
For I Apollo, from Latona sprung,
Am near at hand, and now to thee I call:
And thou, Orestes, who thy falchion wav'st
Over that virgin, to my voice attend;
That Helen who alluded thy assault,
When thou, provoking Menelaus' anger,
Didst eagerly rush on, resolv'd to take
Her life away, is she whom in yon folds
Of air thou seest, from thy vindictive hand
Preserv'd, and living still; at Jove's behest
I sav'd, I snatch'd her from thy lifted sword:
For 'tis decreed by fate, she shall enjoy
Immortal life, because she is Jove's Daughter,
And in th' ethereal regions take her seat
With Castor and with Pollux, to protect
The mariners. But thou into thy house
Shalt take another Consort, since the Gods
Embroil'd the Greeks and Phrygians thro' her charms,
And caus'd unnumber'd deaths, that they might purge
The groaning world of its unrighteous swarms.
Thus much for Helen. Yet must thou, Orestes,
Quitting the confines of this land, reside
For one whole year in the Parrhasian realm;
After thy exile, shall the place receive
From those of Aza and th' Arcadian race
The name of Oresteum: thou to Athens
Must thence proceed, a trial to endure
For having slain thy Mother, and thy cause
Against the three Eumenides defend:
The Gods themselves thy judges, on the hill
Of Mars a righteous sentence shall award,

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And there shalt thou prevail: yet more, the Fates
Ordain thou wed her o'er whose neck thou wav'st
Thy sword, the bright Hermoine; in vain
Doth Neoptolemus the promis'd bride
Expect, for her he never shall possess,
But by the sword at Delphi shall he fall,
Because his impious tongue from me hath claim'd
Atonement for his Sire Achilles' death.
On Pylades, to whom thou didst affiance,
Bestow thy Sister; for their future lives
Shall happiness attend.—O Menelaus,
In Argos let Orestes rule; go thou
And wield the sceptre of the Spartan realm,
Retaining still the dower thy Consort brought,
By whom till now thou in unnumber'd toils
(15) Hast ever been involv'd. I who constrain'd
Orestes in maternal gore t' imbrue
His furious hands, all tumult in the city
Will for his sake appease.

ORESTES.

Prophetic God!
Thy oracles, O Phœbus, never prov'd
Fallacious, but by truth's unerring voice
Were dictated. Some Demon had, I fear'd,
Usurp'd thy tripod, and in mimic sounds
Impos'd a specious falshood on mine ear?
But amply hath thy promise been fulfill'd,
And thy behest I therefore will obey.
Lo, I release Hermione from death,
And for the partner of my nuptial bed
Will take the virgin, if her Sire approve.

(15) The editions of Barnes and Dr. Musgrave follow that of Aldus in placing a comma after ἄδωτα, and render this passage quæ te multos dans in labores, huc reduxit. On the authority of Brunck's edition of this Tragedy, printed at Strasburg 1779, I have erased the comma, and availed myself of the version given by him in a note, quæ te indesinenter huc usque laboribus implicuit.

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MENELAUS.

Daughter of Jove, all hail! for thee, O Helen,
Who in the mansions of the Gods resid'st
I term supremely blest.—To you Orestes,
My Daughter, I, as Phœbus gives command,
Affiance; nobly born, and to the child
Of noble parents wedded, may both you,
And I who give her to your arms, be blest.

APOLLO.

Now to the place assign'd let each repair,
And cease your contests.

MENELAUS.

I am bound t' obey.

ORESTES.

And so I am. But now to thee I pledge
My friendship, thro' compassion for the woes
Which thou, O Menelaus, hast endur'd;
And to thy oracles, O Phœbus, yield
Implicit homage.

APOLLO.

Go your several ways,
Revering Peace the loveliest of the Gods.
But to Jove's palace, Helen, will I lead,
Traversing the resplendent starry pole,
Where seated close to Juno and the Bride
Of great Alcides, Hebe, she by mortals
Acknowledg'd as a tutelary Goddess,
The rich libation ever shall receive,
With the Tyndaridæ the Sons of Jove,
Guiding the sailors while they plough the deep.

CHORUS.

O venerable Victory, take possession
Of my whole life, nor ever cease to twine
Around these brows thy laureat wreath divine.

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HISTORY

OF

THE HOUSE OF TANTALUS.

The transactions of the Ancestors of Orestes are so often referred to in the preceding Drama, that I thought it would not be unacceptable to the reader to have a sketch of their history placed before him in one point of view, instead of being interrupted by a variety of detached references, especially as it may be serviceable in giving those who are not intimately conversant with the Classical writers, a clearer view of the other pieces connected with this story, which form a very considerable part of the works of Euripides. Amidst many different, and not unfrequently contradictory accounts, I have made it my business to select such as are either conformable to the Tragedies before us, or serve to supply and connect what the Poet has left deficient.

The Mother of Tantalus was Pluta, the wife of Tmolus, a Lydian King, but Jupiter is said to have been his real Father? the place of his residence was Sipylus, which Achilles, in the Iphigenia in Aulis of our author, represents as an obscure frontier Town, though the riches of Tantalus appear, by the manner in which Plato speaks of them in his Euthyphro, to have been so great that they became proverbial: the Gods honoured his table with their presence at a feast, but his vanity induced him to betray their conversation: he was punished, according to Euripides, for this offence, by a stone of enormous size perpetually hanging in the air suspended over his head: the history of his murdering his son Pelops, and serving up his mangled limbs to his celestial guests, is mentioned by Iphigenia in her captivity among the Tauric Scythians as an improbable

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tale, forged by those savage nations delighting in human sacrifices, who hoped to justify their own cruelties by falsely representing the Gods as having partaken so execrable a banquet. By his Wife Euryanassa, Tantalus had two sons, Pelops and Broteas, and one daughter, Niobe, who married Amphion: after having seen her numerous progeny all slain by the shafts of Apollo and Diana, she was herself transformed into a rock; the tomb of her seven Daughters is mentioned in our Author's Phœnissæ, as situated not far without the gates of Thebes, whose walls her husband Amphion had erected by his lyre. According to Aristotle in his Meteorology, and Strabo, who argues for the probability of such an event from natural causes, the Town of Sipylus was entirely swallowed up by an earthquake; but Plutarch says, the poets considered its demolition as a signal instance of divine vengeance: in such horror and detestation was the memory of Tantalus held by the antients, notwithstanding the great power and heroic qualities of several of his descendants. The account of Tantalus's death given by Antoninus Liberalis, in his Metamorphosis, is, that having denied with an oath the receipt of a pledge entrusted to him by Pandareus the son of Merops, Jupiter punished his perjury by throwing him headlong from the mountain of the same name, at the Foot of which the Town of Sipylus was situated; and Pausanias informs us, that he there saw a conspicuous monument erected to his memory.

After the death of Tantalus, Pelops, who succeeded him, being defeated in several encounters by Ilus the founder of the Trojan nation, sought an establishment in Greece, and entered the lists as one of the competitors for Hippodamia, whose Father, Oenomaus king of Pisa, promised to give her in marriage to the suitor who overcame him in a chariot race; but every one who made unsuccessful pretensions to the Princess

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was to suffer death. Many had accepted this alternative, and perished; for the chariot of Oenomaus was driven by Myrtilus, the son of Mercury, under whose guidance the horses of that monarch always reached the goal first: but Pelops having bribed Myrtilus, by swearing to reward him with the first night's enjoyment of the beautiful Hippodamia, for whom he had been presumptuous enough to entertain a passion, the perfidious charioteer joined his master's wheels to the axle with wax only, in consequence of which Oenomaus was overthrown in the midst of his career. Some disputes no doubt arising between Oenomaus and Pelops in consequence of a victory thus dishonourably won, the latter encountered and slew his antagonist with a spear, which Euripides informs us was preserved as a memorial of his triumph in the palace of his descendants: but no sooner was the victorious Pelops reminded by Myrtilus of the promise he had made to him, than he killed his benefactor, and threw his dead body into the sea; thereby drawing down the vengeance of Mercury on his two eldest sons, Atreus and Thyestes, whom Pausanias instances as affording a striking memorial of the truth of the response given by the Pythian oracle to Glaucus son of Epicydas, who consulted it in regard to a false oath, that the man who commits a perjury draws down the wrath of Heaven on his posterity. But Pelops himself was attended by a degree of prosperity which far exceeded his merits, and notwithstanding the dishonourable means by which he won the race, he celebrated Olympic games with great magnificence, as memorials of his conquest, and in process of time forming several powerful alliances by the marriages of his children, acquired such accessions of territory and authority, that the large peninsula of Greece, which had till then been known by the names of Apia and Pelasgia, received from him that of Peloponesus, which is usually

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adopted in the maps of antient geography. Besides Atreus and Thyestes, of whom I shall soon have occasion to speak more fully, Pelops had five legitimate sons, Letreus, Alcathous, Plisthenes, Trœzen, and Pittheus: the latter of these (whose Daughter Æthra was the Mother of Theseus) is spoken of by Euripides as a man of singular piety; his residence was at Trœzene, a city in the Argive territories, so named from his brother Trœzen, where he lived to a very advanced age, and educated his Great-grandson Hippolitus, the son of Theseus. Plutarch expressly says, that Pelops had many Daughters, but I have not been able to discover the names of more than three; Anaxibia, Lysidice, and Nicippe; the first married Strophius king of Phocis, and was Mother to Pylades, whose friendship for his kinsman Orestes has been universally celebrated; the second married Electryon king of Mycene, to whom she bore Alcmena, the Mother of Hercules; the third married Sthenelus, who, upon the death of Electryon, whom Amphitryon, the husband of his Daughter Alcmena, had accidentally slain, seized the throne of Mycene, in which he was succeeded by Eurystheus, his son by Nicippe, whose tyrannical behaviour to his kinsman Hercules, and after that hero's death to his children, whom he pursued with unremitting cruelty, is largely treated of in the Tragedy called Heraclidæ, or the Children of Hercules. Chrysiypus, a natural son of Pelops, was treacherously stolen from him by Laius his guest, who by this breach of hospitality drew down upon himself the vengeance of Heaven, and perished, as the oracle had foretold, by the hands of his own son Oedipus.

After the death of Pelops, the rest of his children having dispersed themselves through various parts of the Peloponesus, Atreus and Thyestes remained in the undivided possession of Argos, till Mercury having caused a Ram with a golden fleece to appear among

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the flocks of the former, he claimed the throne in consequence of this prodigy, supposed to be vouchsafed from Heaven in his favour. The citizens were, by public proclamation, called together to decide this important question; but, previous to their meeting, Thyestes, with the assistance of Ærope, his Brother's Wife whom he had debauched, conveyed the Golden Ram into his own stalls, and thereby procured from the assembly a declaration in his favour. All succeeding ages have recorded with detestation the cruelty with which these injuries were revenged by Atreus, who caused two children, the fruits of this incestuous commerce between Thyestes and Ærope, to be killed, and served up to their Father at an entertainment: the sun recoiled with horror at such an execrable feast, and many portentous signs of the wrath of Heaven appeared in the skies. Ærope herself was thrown into the sea by the remorseless Atreus, who for a time prospered in his wickedness, and not only kept possession of the throne of Argos, whence he expelled Thyestes; but, as Thucydides informs us, upon his nephew Eurystheus being slain in Attica by the sons of Hercules, added to his domains the neighbouring city of Mycene, which was considered as a great accession of power both to himself and his successors: vengeance however at length overtook him, for Ægisthus, son of Thyestes, by an incestuous commerce of a far more horrid nature with his own Daughter Pelopia, had no sooner attained man's estate, than he murdered his Uncle Atreus, and reinstated his Father Thyestes. Agamemnon and Menelaus, the two sons whom Ærope had borne to Atreus previous to her seduction by Thyestes, were saved from the fury of the conqueror, and sent to Sicyon, where Polyidus then reigned, who for their greater security consigned them to the protection of Oeneus king of Oetolia. In this state of precarious dependance, Agamemnon perpetrated a daring and atrocious action in

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murdering a prince called Tantalus, who was either son of Broteas, whom I have already mentioned as younger son of the first Tantalus, or of Thyestes; for Pausanias, from whom I extract my account of him, leaves that point doubtful. Agamemnon's motive for killing him, appears to have been in order to take possession of his Wife Clytemnestra, Daughter to Tyndarus king of Sparta, who reproaches him in the Iphigenia in Aulis, one of the Tragedies of our author, with having also destroyed her child by her first husband, then an infant, whom he tore from her arms, and dashed against the pavement. Castor and Pollux, the two celebrated sons of Jupiter, whom Leda bore to that God in consequence of his approaching her under the form of a Swan, made war on the ravisher, and defeated him: the troops of a man in his situation, could have consisted only of a band of robbers gathered together by the hopes of plunder: but upon his being vanquished, and becoming a suppliant, Tyndarus forgave him, bestowed Clytemnestra on him in marriage, and assisting him with his troops, enabled him and his Brother Menelaus to subdue Thyestes, who fled to an altar of Juno as an asylum, from whence he capitulated and surrendered himself up to his nephews, on their taking an oath that they would spare his life; they observed their engagement, but deposed and confined him to the island of Cithera, where he ended his days.

Menelaus, the younger son of Atreus, married Helen, Tyndarus's other daughter, the most beautiful woman of her time, and heiress to the kingdom of Sparta: she had so many powerful Grecian Princes for her suitors, that her Father was extremely embarrassed how to dispose of her, lest by preferring one of those who formed pretensions, he should draw upon himself a number of formidable enemies. The following expedient occurred to him: having prevailed on them all to swear, that they would unite in supporting the future husband

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of the Princess against any man, whether Greek or Barbarian, who presumed to violate his bed, he permitted Helen to make her own choice; and she decided in favour of Menelaus, to whom she was immediately wedded: but their nuptial happiness was soon interrupted by the arrival of Paris, one of the sons of Priam king of Troy, who sailed to Sparta, magnificently equipped, and with a sumptuous train of attendants. Menelaus received him with great hospitality; and he gained so far on the affections of Helen as to prevail on her, during the absence of her husband, whom some affairs of importance summoned to Crete, to embark and fly with him from Sparta. The success of Paris in this dishonourable amour, is by Euripides, in several of his Tragedies, as well as by most other antient writers, attributed to the favour of Venus, to whom he had adjudged the Golden Apple, the prize of beauty, for which that Goddess contended with Juno and Minerva: but in the Tragedy, intitled Helen, we meet with a yet fuller vindication of Helen's character than the assertion of her being inspired with irresistible love by the impulse of Venus; it being related how she was conveyed by Mercury through the air into Egypt, and consigned to the care of Proteus, the king of that country, while Paris only bore away a cloud which resembled her. The deception, we are told, continued during the whole siege of Troy, and till Menelaus was driven to the shores of Egypt, in his return from that ten years war: on his landing, the shadow vanished, and he recovered the real Helen, whose virtue had been preserved uncontaminated: nor is this the mere invention of the Poet, but has the sanction of Herodotus, the father of Greek Historians, in whom the reader will find the same account, with some little variations.

The real or imaginary Helen being thus conveyed from Sparta by Paris, Menelaus sent ambassadors to demand her back again; but the influence of the

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amorous Prince prevailing over the counsels of Antenor and the more prudent senators, the Trojans refused to restore her, and plunged their country in a war which occasioned the total destruction of its capital city, and the deaths of Paris, and almost all the numerous family of Priam.

The throne of the deposed Thyestes being occupied by Agamemnon, he extended his dominion over a considerable part of the Peloponesus and neighbouring islands. The superior populousness and extent of his territories, beyond those of the other confederate kings, appears from the troops they furnished for the siege of Troy, being arranged in Homer's catalogue of the ships in two large divisions; the first of eighty ships from Argos, and several other places, under the command of Diomede; and the second furnished by Mycene, and the rest of Agamemnon's domains, consisting of one hundred ships, which were commanded by himself in person. The cities of Argos and Mycene, which are at no greater distance from each other than fifty stadia, or about six miles and a quarter, were both built by Perseus and the Cyclops; but became, according to Strabo, the capitals of separate kingdoms, when the posterity of Danaus and Amythaon parted the land into two distinct shares; but after the defeat and death of Eurystheus, Mycene was reunited to Argos, and when Agamemnon succeeded his father Atreus, he enlarged and beautified Mycene so much, that some erroneously called him the founder of that city. The inaccurate manner in which Euripides is perpetually confounding Argos and Mycene, though the dramatic scene of action is confined to very narrow limits, has not escaped the notice of the Geographers.

The unsuccessful suitors of Helen, who, if we may depend upon the list given of them by Apollodorus, were twenty-eight in number, and all of them the sons of Gods or of Kings, or at least of celebrated Heroes,

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being summoned together by Menelaus to fulfill the solemn engagement they had entered into, collected a great naval armament from the various states of Greece, and appointed to the command, Agamemnon, brother to the injured husband, and by far the most powerful monarch among the confederates.

Before Agamemnon sailed for Troy, his wife Clytemnestra had borne him four children: three of them were daughters, Iphigenia, Chrysothemis, and Electra: his only son, Orestes, was at that time an infant in his nurse's arms. The confederate fleet of Greece being detained by a dead calm at the place of their rendezvous, the haven of Aulis, a sea-port in the Bœotian territories, the leaders of the troops had recourse to the Oracle, and obtained a response from Calchas the soothsayer, who, reminding Agamemnon of a vow he had formerly made to sacrifice the most beautiful production of the year to Diana, informed him, that, in consequence thereof, his daughter Iphigenia was claimed by the Goddess for a victim, as being the most beautiful of all those who were born that year, and assured him that the fleet would remain moored in the bay of Aulis till she was offered up. The struggles between paternal tenderness and the thirst of glory in Agamemnon, the insidious stratagems practised by Menelaus, urging him to consent to the unnatural sacrifice; the plaints of Iphigenia herself, when she first hears of her doom, and the heroism with which she afterwards consents to yield up life, when she finds that by dying she shall conduce to the prosperity of her country, together with the indignation and resentment of her mother Clytemnestra and her lover Achilles, all conspire to form one of the most pathetic tragedies of Euripides. When Iphigenia was borne to the altar, the whole army attended the moving spectacle; and after the usual rites of consecration were finished, the knife appeared to transpierce the bosom of the Princess: but

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when they turned their eyes, they found a Hind lie gasping on the ground, which was substituted by Diana in the room of Iphigenia, who vanished from all eyes, and was wafted by the Goddess in a cloud to her temple among the Scythians at Tauris, where she officiated as Priestess, and was constrained by the barbarous customs adopted in that country to sacrifice every Greek who landed on those inhospitable shores.

During the siege of Troy, Paris being slain by the arrows of Philoctetes, Helen married his Brother Deiphobus, who perished when the city was taken, his perfidious Consort betraying him to the Greeks. Helen then fell into the hands of her first husband Menelaus, who was soon reconciled to her. Agamemnon escaped the dangers of the sea, and the fate of many of his comrades who were shipwrecked on the coast of Eubœa, being misguided by false lights placed on the promontory of Caphareus for that purpose by Nauplius, the Father of Palamedes, who had been unjustly put to death in the Grecian camp, through the treacherous contrivances of Ulysses. The Leader of the confederate Grecian troops reached Argos in triumph, and brought with him his captive, the prophetic Cassandra, whom he had reserved for his concubine, at the division of the spoils. Clytemnestra, already embittered against him by the murder of her first Husband Tantalus, and the sacrifice of Iphigenia, whom she apprehended to have been really slain at the altar, would not brook this fresh indignity, but conspiring with her paramour Ægisthus, the son of Thyestes, threw over Agamemnon, as he was coming out of the bath, a garment sewed up at the neck and arms, and while he was struggling in the folds of this delusive vest, smote him with an axe, and killed him; after which she married the adulterer Ægisthus, who took possession of the throne.

A faithful servant conveyed Orestes, on his Father's death, to Phocis, and placed him under the protection

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of Strophius; Electra remained at Argos, and was given in marriage by the usurper to a Peasant, in order to prevent her becoming the wife of some man who might have had influence enough to reinstate the children of Agamemnon in their hereditary dominions. When Orestes arrived at years of maturity, he repaired to the oracle of Apollo at Delphi, which commanded him to revenge his Father's death; upon which he returned to Argos in disguise, accompanied by his inseparable friend Pylades: on their arrival, they were received in a cottage, on the confines of the Argive dominions, by Electra and her nominal Husband; and learnt that the Princess still remained a virgin, the Peasant retaining a strong attachment to Agamemnon's family, and not considering Ægisthus as having any right to give her to him in marriage. After a short consultation together, they formed, and soon carried into execution, a plan for killing both Ægisthus and Clytemnestra; but no sooner had Orestes imbrued his hands in his Mother's blood, than the Furies arising from hell haunted and drove him to distraction; the citizens of Argos in the mean time looking with horror upon the action committed by him and Electra, refused to hold any intercourse with such profane wretches, and assembled together to pass sentence on them six days after Clytemnestra's death: at this period, Menelaus, who had been separated from the rest of the fleet, and experienced a most tedious voyage, having, according to the account given by Teucer in the Helen of our Author, been seven years in his return from Troy; landed with Helen and his few surviving friends at Nauplia, a sea-port in the neighbourhood of Argos, where he was immediately apprised of the calamities which had in his absence befallen his family: in his interview with his nephew, the unhappy Orestes, he shewed some disposition to assist him, but soon forsook, and gave him and his Sister up to the fury of the people, on being told by Tyndarus,

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that, if he interfered, he should never return to Sparta, the sovereignty of that country being to devolve to Helen after the death of her aged Father, who had no longer any son to inherit his dominions, both Castor and Pollux being translated to the Heavens, and become Stars.

The council of Argos having condemned Orestes and Electra for the murder of their mother, and given them the option of putting themselves to death, they, after some consultation with Pylades, determined, as we have just seen in the Tragedy of Orestes, to revenge themselves by killing Helen, and to detain Hermione as an hostage, to constrain her Father to pardon them. While Menelaus was vowing vengeance against them, for the supposed murder of his Wife, who had suddenly vanished, Apollo descended to save them both from their enraged Uncle and the Argive people, by giving testimony in favour of Orestes, that he had acted in pursuance of the Gods' especial commands, by putting his Mother to death; but directed him, in order to expiate the pollution he had incurred by shedding her blood, to remain in a state of banishment for one year, and after that submit his cause to the judgement of the Areopagus at Athens. When Orestes attended that venerable assembly, one of the Furies appeared as his accuser, and Apollo was for the second time a witness in his behalf: the votes for acquitting or condemning him being found, upon casting them up, to be equal, Minerva decided the cause in his favour. The Furies however continued to persecute him, and he again had recourse to the oracle of Apollo, who ordered him to bring the statue of Diana from Tauris, and deposit it at Athens: he accordingly sailed on this expedition, accompanied by his faithful friend and kinsman Pylades, whom he had previously affianced to his Sister Electra; on their landing they were seized by the peasants of the country, and carried to Thoas the king, who consigned them to their Sister Iphigenia as fit victims to bleed at

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the altar, where they were on the point of being sacrificed, when a recognition happily ensued; after which they all united in concerting means for their escape, which they with great difficulty effected, and not without the especial interposition of Minerva; carrying away their Sister, and the image of the Goddess Diana, to whom Iphigenia, during the remainder of her life, continued to be a Priestess at Brauronia, in the Athenian territories.

During the misfortunes of Orestes, Menelaus bestowed his only Daughter Hermione (whom he had promised in marriage to his Nephew) on Pyrrhus, or (as Euripides and several other writers call him) Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles; having offended Apollo by imputing to him the death of his Father, slain in the temple of that God by the shafts of Paris, Neoptolemus went to Delphi to deprecate his wrath. Orestes at the same time went thither to counteract his rival, and by artfully diffusing rumours among the inhabitants at Delphi, and persuading them that Neoptolemus came thither with no pious design, but in order to plunder their temple, the treasures of which were immense, caused them to attack and murder him, as he was going unarmed to make his propitiatory offerings to that Deity. Having contrived the death of Neoptolemus, Orestes came to Phthia, carried off Hermione, and married her, and his faithful comrade Pylades was at the same time united to Electra.—The account given by Euripides of the descendants of Tantalus here ceases, leaving Orestes in tranquil possession of the united kingdoms of Argos and Mycene, reconciled to his Uncle and the citizens, who had just before sentenced him to die, and, pursuant to the injunction of Apollo, married to the only Daughter of Menelaus and Helen, the heiress to the Spartan dominions.

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THE

PHŒNICIAN DAMSELS.

Αλλ' ὁ μεν εν Θηβῃ πολυηρατω αλγεα πασχων
Καδμειων ηνασσι, θεων ολοας δια βυλας·
Ἡ δ' εβη εις Αϊδαο πυλαςταο κρατεροιο
Ὠ αχεϊ σχομενη· τῳ δ' αλγεα καλλιπ' οπισσω
Πολλα μαλ', ὁσσα τε μητερος Ερινυες εκτελεωσι. HOMER.

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PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

JOCASTA.

ATTENDANT.

ANTIGONE.

CHORUS OF PHŒNICIAN DAMSELS.

POLYNICES.

ETEOCLES.

CREON.

MENÆCEUS.

TIRESIAS.

MESSENGER.

ANOTHER MESSENGER.

OEDIPUS.

SCENE—AN OPEN COURT BEFORE THE PALACE AT THEBES.

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THE

PHŒNICIAN DAMSELS.

JOCASTA.

O Thou, who thro' the starry Heavens divid'st
Thy path, and on a golden chariot sitt'st
Exalted, radiant Sun, beneath the hoofs
Of whose swift steeds the fiery volumes roll,
How inauspicious, o'er the Theban race
Didst thou dart forth thy beams, the day when Cadmus
Came to this land from the Phœnician coast;
He erst obtain'd Harmonia for his bride,
Daughter of Venus; of their loves the fruit
Was Polydorus, and from him, as fame
Relates, descended Labdacus the Sire
Of Laius. From Menœceus I derive
My birth; my Brother Creon and myself
From the same Mother spring: but I am call'd
Jocasta, 'twas the name my Father gave;
Me royal Laius married; but when long
Our bed had prov'd unfruitful, he to search
The oracle of Phœbus went, and sued
To the prophetic God, that he our house
Would cheer with an auspicious race of Sons:
The God replied; "Beware (1) O thou who rul'st

(1) The cause why this curse was denounced against Laius, though here omitted, is expressed in the oracle given to him, as preserved in the Greek Scholia to the Frogs of Aristophanes, and prefixed by Barnes, Valkenaer, and Dr. Musgrave, to their editions of this Tragedy.

Offspring of royal Labdacus, O Laius,
For an auspicious progeny, to Heaven
Suest thou? on thee will I bestow a Son,
But thee the Fates have doom'd by that Son's hands
To perish: Pelops' imprecations mov'd
Indignant Jove, and to the Sire whose child

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' The martial Thebans, strive not to obtain
" A progeny against the will of Heaven:
" If thou beget a Son, that Son shall slay thee,
" And all thy household shall be plung'd in blood."
He overcome by lust, and flush'd with wine,
In an unguarded moment disobey'd:
But I no sooner had brought forth the child,
Than he grown conscious of his foul offence
Against Apollo's mandate, to his shepherds
The new-born infant gave, in Juno's meads,
And on Cithæron's Hill, to be expos'd,
Maiming his feet with pointed steel, whence Greece
Hath call'd him Oedipus. But they who fed
The steeds of Polybus, soon taking up
Convey'd him to their home, and in the hands
Of their kind Mistress plac'd, she at her breast
Nurtur'd my Son, and artfully persuaded
Her Lord that she was Mother to the Boy:
Soon as the manly beard his cheek o'erspread,
Aware from his own knowledge, or inform'd
Of the deceit, sollicitous to learn
Who were his Parents, to Apollo's shrine
He journey'd; and at the same time was Laius,
My Husband, hastening hither, to enquire
Whether the child he had expos'd was dead.
In Phocis, where two sever'd roads unite,
They met: the charioteer of Laius cried
In an imperious tone; " Give way to Kings,
" Thou Stranger:" yet the silent youth advanc'd
With inborn greatness fir'd, till o'er his feet
Distain'd with gore the steel-hoof'd coursers trod;

Thou treacherously didst steal away, the God
Hath granted this irrevocable boon.

In Apollodorus, we meet with the fact on which the above verses are founded. Laius, after having been kindly entertained by Pelops, was so regardless of the laws of hospitality, as to carry off Chrysippus, that monarch's natural son, who became his charioteer and minion.

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Hence (for what need have I to speak of aught
That's (2) foreign to my woes?) th' unconscious Son
Slew his own Father, seiz'd the spoils, and gave
To Polybus, who nurtur'd him, the car.
But when with ruthless fangs the Sphynx laid waste
The city, and my Husband was no more,
My Brother Creon by the herald's voice
Proclaim'd, that whosoever could expound
Th' ænigma by that crafty Virgin forg'd
Should win me for his bride: that mystic clue
The luckless Oedipus my son unravel'd;
Hence o'er this land appointed King, he gain'd
For his reward a sceptre; wretched youth!
Unwittingly espousing me who bore him;
Nor yet was I his Mother then aware
That we committed incest. I produc'd
To my own Son four children; two were males,
Eteocles and Polynices fam'd
For martial prowess; daughters two, the one
Her Father call'd Ismene, but the first
I named Antigone. Soon as he learn'd
That I whom he had wedded was his Mother,
The miserable Oedipus, o'erwhelm'd
With woes accumulated, from their sockets
Tore with a golden clasp his bleeding eyes.
But since the beard o'ershaded my Sons' cheeks,
Their Sire they in a dungeon have confin'd,

(2) As this parenthesis in the long narration of Jocasta, which began with speaking of remote events, and deducing her genealogy from Cadmus the founder of Thebes, may perhaps appear to other readers, as I confess it does to myself, ill placed in that part of her speech, where she relates a fact so immediately interesting to her as the death of Laius, I am induced to publish the following manuscript note of the late Reverend Stephen Cæsar de Missy, written with a pencil in the margin of a copy of King's Euripides, now in my possession: "Pro Τα 'κλς legendum suspicor "Ταυλως, ut sententia sit, *Quid ordine de malis mihi opus est dicere?* subin- "tellectâ nimirum præpositione περι; ut Odyss. L. xi. v. 173. Ειπε δε "μοι Παλλας τι και Τινος ωη καλλιεκτον" I have however followed the vulgar reading, as I usually do in dubious points.

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The memory of this sad event t' efface,
For which they needed every subtle art.
Within these mansions he still lives, but sick
With evil fortunes, on his Sons pours forth
The most unholy curses, that this house
They by the sword may portion out. Alarm'd
Lest Heaven those vows accomplish if they dwell
Together, they by compact have resolv'd
The younger Brother Polynices first
A voluntary exile shall depart,
And, with Eteocles remaining here
To wield the sceptre of this realm, exchange
His station year by year: but th' elder-born
Since he was seated on the lofty throne
Departs not thence, and from this land expells
The injur'd Polynices, who, to Argos
Repairing, with Adrastus hath contracted
Most strict affinity, and hither brings
A numerous squadron of heroic youths;
These bulwarks for their sevenfold gates renown'd
E'en now in arms approaching, he demands
His Father's sceptre, and an equal share
Of the domain. But I to end their strife,
On Polynices have prevail'd, to come
Under the sanction of a warrior's faith,
And parly with his Brother, ere the hosts
In battle join: the messenger I sent
Informs me he the summons will attend.
O thou who dwell'st amidst Heaven's lucid folds,
Save us, dread Jove, and reconcile my children:
For thou, if thou art wise, wilt ne'er permit
That one poor mortal should be always wretched.

[*Exit* JOCASTA.

ANTIGONE, ATTENDANT.

ATTENDANT.

O fair Antigone, illustrious blossom
Of your paternal house, since from your chamber

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Your Mother hath allowed you to come forth
At your request, and from these roofs behold
The Argive hosts, stay here, while I the road
Explore, lest in our passage if we meet
Some citizen, malignant tongues should blame
Both me the servant who obey, and you
For giving such command. But their whole camp
Since I have search'd, to you will I relate
All that these eyes have witness'd, and whate'er
I heard amidst the Argives, when employ'd
By both your Brothers, I 'twixt either host
Bore pledges of their compact. But these mansions
No citizen approaches: haste, ascend
Yon antient stairs of cedar, and o'erlook
The spacious fields that skirt Ismenos' stream,
And Dirce's fountain; what an host of foes!

ANTIGONE.

Thy aged arm stretch forth, and as I climb
The narrow height, my tottering steps sustain.

ATTENDANT.

Give me your hand, for at a lucky hour
You mount the turret, the Pelasgian host
Is now in motion, and the troops divide.

ANTIGONE.

Thou venerable Daughter of Latona,
Thrice sacred Goddess, Hecate, how gleams
With brazen armour the whole field around!

ATTENDANT.

For Polynices to his native land
Returns not like a man of little note,
But comes in anger by unnumber'd steeds
Attended, and the loudest din of arms.

ANTIGONE.

Are the gates clos'd? what barriers guard the walls
Rear'd by Amphion's skill?

ATTENDANT.

Be of good chear.

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The city is made safe within. But look
At him who first advances, if you wish
To know him.

ANTIGONE.

By those snowy plumes distinguish'd,
Before the ranks who marches in the van,
With ease sustaining on his nervous arm
That brazen shield?

ATTENDANT.

A General; royal Maid.

ANTIGONE.

Who is he? in what country was he born,
Old Man, inform me, and what name he bears.

ATTENDANT.

Mycenæ glories in the warrior's birth,
But near the marsh of Lerna he resides;
His name's Hippomedon, a mighty Chief.

ANTIGONE.

Ah, with what pride, how terrible an aspect,
How like an earthborn giant, doth he move!
His targe with stars is cover'd, and that air
Resembles not the feeble race of man.

ATTENDANT.

Behold you not the Chief who Dirce's stream
Is crossing!

ANTIGONE.

In what different armour clad!
But who is he?

ATTENDANT.

Tydeus, the noble son
Of Oeneus; in embattled fields his breast
With true Ætolian courage is inspir'd.

ANTIGONE.

Is he, O veteran, Husband to the Sister
Of Polynices' Consort? how array'd
In party-colour'd mail, a Half-barbarian!

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ATTENDANT.

(3) All the Ætolians, O my Daughter, arm'd
With bucklers, can expertly hurl the lance.

ANTIGONE.

But whence, old Man, art thou assur'd of this?

ATTENDANT.

The various figures wrought upon the shields
I notic'd, at the time I from the walls
Went to your Brother with the pledge of truce:
When these I see, their wearers well I know.

ANTIGONE.

But who is he who moves round Zethus' tomb,
A youth with streaming ringlets, and with eyes
Horribly glaring?

ATTENDANT.

He too is a Chief.

ANTIGONE.

What multitudes in burnish'd armour clad
Follow his steps!

ATTENDANT.

From Atalanta sprung,
Parthenopæus is the name he bears.

ANTIGONE.

May Dian, who o'er craggy mountains speeds
Attended by his Mother, with her shafts
Transpierce th' audacious youth who comes to sack
My city!

ATTENDANT.

These rash vows suppress, O Daughter,
For they with justice these domains invade,
And therefore will the Gods I fear discern
Their better cause.

(3) "The Ætolians, living at the extremity of Europe, had a mixture "of Greek and Barbarian manners, being all clad in armour, and hurl- "ing their javelins. For in all probability at the time of the siege of "Thebes, the Greeks made use of armour; but the Barbarians were "expert in throwing their spears, which the Greeks afterwards learnt "the art of." SCHOLIAST.

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ANTIGONE.

But where is he, whom Fate
Decreed in evil hour from the same womb
With me to spring? Say, O thou dear old Man,
Where's Polynices?

ATTENDANT.

He beside the tomb
Of Niobe's seven virgin Daughters stands
Close to Adrastus. See you him?

ANTIGONE.

I see him,
But not distinctly; I can just discern
A faint resemblance of that kindred form,
The image of that bosom. Would to Heaven,
Borne on the skirts of yonder passing cloud,
Thro' the etherial paths, I with these feet
Could to my Brother urge my swift career!
Then would I fling my arms round the dear neck
Of him who long hath been a wretched exile.
How gracefully, in golden arms array'd
Bright as Hyperion's radiant beams, he moves!

ATTENDANT.

To fill your soul with joy, the Chief, these doors,
Secur'd by an inviolable truce,
Anon will enter.

ANTIGONE.

O thou aged man;
But who is he who on yon chariot, drawn
By milk-white coursers, seated, guides the rèins?

ATTENDANT.

The seer Amphiareus, O royal Maid;
He bears the victims that with crimson tides
Must drench the ground.

ANTIGONE.

Encircled with a zone
Of radiance, O thou daughter of the Sun,
Pale Moon, who from his beams thy golden orb

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Illum'st, behold with what a steady thong,
And how discreetly he those coursers guides!
But where is Capaneus, who proudly utters
Against this city the most horrid threats?

ATTENDANT.

To these seven turrets each approach he marks,
The walls from their proud summit to their base
Measuring with eager eye.

ANTIGONE.

Dread Nemesis,
Ye too, O deep-ton'd thunderbolts of Jove,
And livid flames of lightning; yours, 'tis yours
To blast such arrogance. Is this the man
Who vow'd that he the captive Theban Dames
In slavery plung'd, would to Mycene lead,
To Lerna, where the God of Ocean fix'd
His trident, whence its waters bear the name
Of Amyòne? but, O child of Jove,
Diana, venerable Queen, who bind'st
Thy streaming tresses with a golden cawl,
Never may I endure the loathsome yoke
Of servitude.

ATTENDANT.

The royal mansion enter,
O Daughter, and beneath its roof remain
In your apartment, since you have indulg'd
You wish, and view'd those objects you desir'd.
A tumult in the city now prevails:
The women to the palace rush in crowds,
For the whole female sex are prone to slander,
And soon as they some slight occasion find,
On which malignant rumours they can ground,
Add many more: for on such baneful themes
To them is it delightful to converse. [*Exeunt.*

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CHORUS.

O D E.

I. 1.

Borne from Phœnician (4) shores I cross'd the deep,
My tender years to Phœbus they consign
To sprinkle incense on his shrine,
And dwell beneath Parnassus' steep
O'erspread with everlasting snow:
Our dashing oars were plied in haste
Thro' the Ionian wave, whose eddies flow
Round Sicily's inhospitable waste (5);
Then vernal Zephyrs breath'd, our sails around,
And Heaven's high-vaulted roof convey'd the murmuring sound.

(4) The original expression, Φοινισσας απο νασου is rendered in the Latin versions Phœnissà ab insulâ, which has given rise to a variety of conjectures. The author of the Greek paraphrase qualifies the term by that of Χερσονησου, and Dr. Musgrave observes, that νασος, in the poets, sometimes signifies a peninsula, but the reader will, by turning to any map of antient geography, find that Phœnicia was by no means either an Island or a Peninsula, but a part of the Asiatic continent extending itself for a considerable length on the borders of the Mediterranean Sea. It is not improbable, that this passage was what Dr. Shuckford had immediately in view, when in a note to his Connection of Sacred and Prophane History, Vol. I. p. 157. 3d edition, he speaks of the Antients calling such countries Isles as bordered on the Sea, though they were really part of the continent, especially if they usually sailed to them. But the Phœnician Island, says the Scholiast, is by some understood to mean Tyre, and if so, the term νασος will by no means stand in need of any qualification, as the junction of Tyre to the continent, which rendered it a peninsula, was effected by Alexander the Great, at a period subsequent not only to the days of Oedipus, but also to those of Euripides. But Valkenaer concludes his note on the passage by observing, that the silence of the antient writers in regard to what city of Phœnicia was then taken, of which the Damsels composing the Chorus might be considered by the Poet as the chosen spoils, has rendered all our enquiries on the subject ineffectual.

(5) "In Sicily being called barren, which at that time was inhabited "by the Cyclops, unacquainted with the art of sowing corn, there is no "great improbability: at least every one acknowledges, that the fields "which lie close to the sea-shore, for the most part produce no "crops." PIERS.

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I. 2.

A chosen offering to the Delphic God,
I from my native city, to this land
Where aged Cadmus bore command,
Am come, obedient to the nod
Of those who from Agenor spring,
To the proud towers of Laius' race,
Our kindred govern'd by a kindred king.
Here stand I, like an image on its base,
Tho' destin'd to partake refin'd delights,
Bathe in Castalia's stream, and tend Apollo's rites.

III.

O mountain, from whose cloven height,
There darts a double stream of light,
Oft on thy topmost ridge the Menades are seen,
And thou, each day distilling generous wine,
O plant of Bacchus, whose ripe clusters shine,
Blushing thro' the leaf's faint green;
Ye caves, in which the Python lay,
And hills, from whence Apollo twang'd his bow,
Around your heights o'erspread with snow,
'Midst my lov'd virgin comrades may I stray,
Each anxious fear expelling from my breast,
In the world's center, that auspicious fane
The residence of Phœbus blest,
And bid adieu to Dirce's plain.

II. 1.

But now before these walls doth Mars advance,
And brandish slaughter's flaming torch around;
May Thebes ne'er feel the threaten'd wound,
For to a friend his friend's mischance
Is grievous as his own: each ill
That lights upon these sevenfold towers,
With equal woe Phœnicia's realm must fill:
For Thebes I mourn; since of one blood with ours
From Io's loves this nation dates its birth,
Those sorrows I partake which vex my kindred earth.

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II. 2.

Thick as a wintry cloud that phalanx stands,
Whose gleaming shields portend the bloody fight,
The God of War with stern delight,
Shall to the siege those hostile bands
Lead on, and rouse the Fiends to smite
The race of an incestuous bed:
Much, O Pelasgian Argos, much thy might,
And more the vengeance of the Gods I dread;
For arm'd with justice on his native land
Rushes that banish'd youth, the sceptre to demand.

POLYNICES, CHORUS.

POLYNICES.

They who were station'd to observe the gates,
Unbarr'd them, and with courtesy receiv'd me
As I the fortress enter'd: hence I fear
Lest now they in their wily toils have caught
They should detain, and slay me; I with eyes
Most vigilant must therefore look around
To guard 'gainst treachery: but the sword which arms
This hand shall give me courage. Ho! who's there?
Doth a mere sound alarm me? All things seem,
E'en to the bravest, dreadful, when they march
O'er hostile ground. I in my Mother plac'd
Firm confidence, yet hardly can I trust
Her who on me prevail'd t' accept the pledge,
And hither come. But I have near at hand
A sure asylum, for the blazing altars
Are not remote, nor yet is yonder house
Without inhabitants. Be sheath'd my sword.
Those courteous Nymphs who at the portals stand
I'll question. O ye foreign Damsels, say,
What was the country whence to Greece ye came?

CHORUS.

Phœnicia is my native land, I there
Was nurtur'd: but Agenor's martial race,

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Me, the first fruit of their victorious arms,
A votive offering to Apollo sent,
But to the venerable prophetic domes,
And blazing shrines of Phœbus, when the Son
Of Oedipus prepar'd to have convey'd me,
The Argives 'gainst this city led their host.
Now in return inform me who thou art,
Who com'st to Thebes, o'er whose seven gates are rear'd
As many turrets.

POLYNICES.

Oedipus, the son
Of Laius, was my Sire: Menœceus' Daughter
Jocasta brought me forth; the name I bear
Is Polynices.

CHORUS.

O, illustrious King,
Thou kinsman to Agenor's race, my lords
By whom I was sent hither, at thy feet,
I as the usage of my country bids
Prostrate myself. Thou to thy native land
After a tedious absence art return'd.
But ho! come forth, thou venerable Dame,
Open the doors; O Mother of the Chief,
Hear'st thou my voice? why yet dost thou delay
To cross the lofty palace, and with speed
In those fond arms thy dearest son infold?

JOCASTA, POLYNICES, CHORUS.

JOCASTA.

Within the palace, O Phœnician nymphs,
Hearing your voice, I with a tardy step
Trembling thro' age, creep hither. O my Son,
At length, I after many days, once more
Behold that face: fling, fling those arms around
The bosom of your Mother; those lov'd cheeks
Let me embrace, and with your azure tresses
My neck o'ershadowing, mix my streaming hair.

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To these maternal arms you scarce return,
Till hope and expectation both had fail'd.
O how shall I accost you, how impart
To my whole frame the transports of my soul,
And all around me, wheresoe'er I turn,
Bid pleasures past, and distant years revive?
My Son, you left this mansion of your Sire
A desert, by your haughty Brother wrong'd
And exil'd from your country. By each friend
How greatly hath your absence been bewail'd!
How greatly by all Thebes! My hoary locks
Hence did I sever from this aged head,
Hence weeping utter many piteous notes,
And, O my Son, the tissued robes of white
Which erst I wore, exchange for sable weeds,
These loath'd habiliments. Within the palace
Your Father of his eyesight reft, bewails
The disunited pillars of his house:
Resolv'd to slay himself, he sometimes strives
To rush on the drawn sword; then searches round
For the high beam to fix the gliding noose,
Groaning forth imprecations 'gainst his Son;
Thus uttering with shrill tone his clamorous plaints,
He lives encompass'd by perpetual night.
But, ah! my Son, by wedlock's strictest bonds
United, I am told that you enjoy
A foreign Consort, in a foreign realm,
To vex your Mother' soul and the stern ghos
Of Laius; on such ill-assorted nuptials
Curses attend. The (6) Hymeneal torch
I kindled not, to grace your spousal rites,
As custom hath ordain'd, and it behoves
A happy Mother: nor his cooling stream
To fill the laver did Ismenos yield;
Nor on th' arrival of thy royal Bride

(6) "It was customary for the Bride to be conducted by the mother "of the Bridegroom bearing a kindled torch." SCHOLIAST.

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Thro' Thebes were festive acclamations heard.
Perish the cause of this unnatural war,
Be it or sword, or discord, of your Sire,
Or Fate, whose horrors revel in the house
Of Oedipus: for these disasters sting
My soul with anguish.

CHORUS.

Great endearments rise
From pangs maternal, and all women love
Their progeny.

POLYNICES.

Amidst my foes I come,
O Mother, whether wisely or unwisely,
Great are my doubts: but all men are constrain'd
To love their country. He who argues aught
Against a truth so clear, in empty words
Takes pleasure, while his heart confutes his tongue.
Yet with such panic terror was I seiz'd,
Lest by some stratagem my Brother slay me,
That bearing a drawn falchion in my hand,
I cast my eyes around on every side
As I the city travers'd: my sole trust
Is in the truce he swore to, and thy faith
Which led me to this mansion of my Sire:
Yet as I came, full many a tear I shed,
After long absence, to behold the palace,
The sacred altars of the Gods, that ring
Where wrestlers strive, scene of my youthful sports,
And Dirce's fountain. Hence unjustly driven,
I in a foreign city dwell, and steep
These eyes in tears incessant. But to add
Grief to my griefs, thee with thy tresses shorn
I see, and in a sable vest array'd.
Wretch that I am! how dreadful and how hard
To reconcile, is enmity 'twixt those
Of the same house, O Mother. But how fares
My aged Sire within, whose eyes are clos'd

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In total darkness? how, my Sisters twain,
Bewail they not their exil'd Brother's fate?

JOCASTA.

Some God hath smitten the devoted house
Of Oedipus. I first 'gainst Heaven's decrees
Brought forth a Son, and in an evil hour
Wedded that Son to whom you owe your birth.
But wherefore should I dwell upon these scenes
Of horror? it behoves us to bear up
Under the woes inflicted by the Gods.
How shall I ask the questions which I wish?
Fearing to wound your soul, yet to propose them,
(7) Is my desire most urgent.

POLYNICES.

Question me,
Leave nought unsaid: for, O my dearest Mother,
Whatever is thy pleasure, will to me
Seem grateful.

JOCASTA.

With what most I wish to know,
Will I begin my questions, Is not exile
A grievous ill?

POLYNICES.

Most grievous, and indeed
Worse than in name.

JOCASTA.

How happens this? whence rises
The misery of the banish'd man?

POLYNICES.

He's subject

(7) "Ελιλιθα is the reading of the manuscripts I have consulted, in "which I apprehend they all concur without any variation; the Oxford "edition ought not to have retained the blunder of ελιλιθας, the origin "of which Valkenaer has traced from Hervagius." BRUNCK. I do not proceed with a translation of Brunck's censures on Hervagius, who printed the word right in his first edition, Basil 1537, though not in those of 1544 and 1551.

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To one severe calamity, he wants
Freedom of speech.

JOCASTA.

The wretch of whom you talk,
Who utters not his thoughts, is but a slave.

POLYNICES.

The follies of their rulers they must bear.

JOCASTA.

This were a piteous doom, to be constrain'd
To imitate th' unwise.

POLYNICES.

If gain ensue,
We must submit, tho' nature's voice forbid.

JOCASTA.

Hopes, it is said, the hungry exile feed.

POLYNICES.

With smiles they view him, but are slow to aid.

JOCASTA.

Doth not Time prove their falshood?

POLYNICES.

They possess
An influence equal to the Queen of Love;
They banish every sorrow from the breast.

JOCASTA.

But whence procur'd you food, ere you obtain'd
A sustenance by wedlock?

POLYNICES.

For the day
At times I had sufficient, but at times
Was wholly destitute.

JOCASTA.

Your father's friends,
And they who shar'd his hospitable board,
Did they not aid you?

POLYNICES.

Be thou ever blest!
For he who is unhappy hath no friend.

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JOCASTA.

But did not your illustrious birth advance you
To some exalted station?

POLYNICES.

A great curse
Is poverty: this high descent with food
Supplied me not.

JOCASTA.

To all mankind it seems
Their native land's most dear.

POLYNICES.

Words have not power
T' express what love I for my country feel.

JOCASTA.

But why to Argos went you, what design
Had you then form'd?

POLYNICES.

Apollo to Adrastus
Pronounc'd a certain oracle.

JOCASTA.

What mean you?
I cannot comprehend.

POLYNICES.

That he in wedlock
Should join his Daughters to the boar and lion.

JOCASTA.

How did the names of these ferocious beasts
Relate to you, my Son?

POLYNICES.

I cannot tell.
To this adventure was I call'd by Fortune.

JOCASTA.

That Goddess is discreet: but by what means
Did you obtain your Consort?

POLYNICES.

It was nigh
When to Adrastus' vestibule I came.

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JOCASTA.

To seek your lodging like a banish'd vagrant?

POLYNICES.

E'en so: and there I met another exile.

JOCASTA.

Who was he? him most wretched too I deem.

POLYNICES.

Tydeus, the son of Oeneus, I am told.

JOCASTA.

But wherefore did Adrastus to wild beasts
Compare you?

POLYNICES.

(8) From our fighting for a den.

JOCASTA.

Did then the Son of Talaus thus expound
The oracles?

POLYNICES.

And on us two bestow'd
His daughters.

JOCASTA.

But have these espousals prov'd
Happy, or inauspicious?

POLYNICES.

I have found
No reason yet to curse the day I wedded.

(8) "Statius paints Tydeus and Polynices as fighting for a bed which "Tydeus attempted to enter, not knowing that it was already occupied "by Polynices. Adrastus came up and separated them, and, as they "were entering the palace, beheld Polynices clad in the terrific hide of "a Lion with its shaggy mane, and the bristles and tusks of the Boar of "Calydon extended over the broad shoulders of Tydeus. The old man, "struck with astonishment at the omen, perceived the accomplishment "of the oracle of Apollo, which had marked out to him his future sons-"in-law under the appellation of these two wild beasts. How much "more probable is this than the account of Euripides! to me, I must "confess the reason assigned by the Tragic Poet appears extremely "flat." VALKENAER.

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JOCASTA.

Yet how prevail'd you on a foreign host
Hither to follow you?

POLYNICES.

Adrastus sware
To Tydeus and myself, his sons-in-law,
(Who now by strict affinity are join'd)
That both of us, he in our native realms
Will reinstate, but Polynices first.
Unnumber'd Argives, and Mycene's chiefs
Crowd to my banners, a lamented succour,
But such as stern necessity demands,
Affording: for my country I invade.
Yet witness for me, O ye righteous Gods,
'Tis with reluctance that I wield the spear
Against my dearest parents. But to thee,
O Mother, it belongs to end this strife,
To reconcile two Brothers, and to cause
My toils, and thine, and those of Thebes, to cease.
Indulge me while I quote an antient maxim;
"Of human honours, Riches are the source,
"And rule with power supreme the tribes of men;"
In quest of wealth I hither come, and lead
Unnumber'd squadrons to the dubious field,
For indigent nobility is scorn'd.

CHORUS.

But lo Eteocles himself repairs
To the appointed conference. In such terms
As may restore peace 'twixt thy Sons, be thine,
Jocasta, the maternal task t' address them.

ETEOCLES, POLYNICES, JOCASTA, CHORUS.

ETEOCLES.

With your request, O Mother, to comply,
Hither I come: but what must now be done?
Let others speak before me. For the squadrons
I round the walls have marshall'd, and restrain'd

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The ardor of the city, till I hear
What terms of peace you would propose, what views
Within these walls induc'd you to receive
My Brother, by the public faith secur'd,
Extorting my consent.

JOCASTA.

Yet pause awhile;
For haste is incompatible with justice:
But slow deliberations oft effect
Such schemes as wisdom dictates. Lay aside
Those threatening looks, that vehemence of soul;
For thou behold'st not the terrific head
Lopp'd from Medusa's shoulders: but behold'st
Thy Brother coming.—Your benignant eyes,
O Polynices, on your Brother turn,
For while you look upon that kindred face
You will speak better, and his words receive
With more advantage. Fain would I suggest
One act of wholesome prudence to you both;
An anger'd friend, when with his friend he meets,
Should at such interview attend to nought
But those pacific schemes on which he came,
Their antient broils forgetting. 'Tis incumbent
On you, O Polynices, to speak first,
Because complaining of great wrongs, you lead
An Argive army hither. May some God
Judge 'twixt my Sons, and reconcile their strife!

POLYNICES.

Plain are the words of truth, and Justice needs
No subtlety t' interpret; for it bears
Enough to recommend it: but Injustice,
Devoid of all internal worth, requires
Each specious art. My Father's house, my interests,
His also, I consulted: and the curse
Which Oedipus had erst pronounc'd against us,
Anxious to shun, from these domains retir'd

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A voluntary exile, and to Him
Surrender'd up the sceptre for one year,
That in my turn I might be King, nor come
With enmity and slaughter in my train,
Those mischiefs which from discord must ensue
To act or suffer. He, who to these terms
Assented, and for sanctions of his oath
Invok'd the Gods, hath not accomplish'd aught
Of his engagements, but still keeps the throne,
And o'er my portion of our Father's realm
Without a colleague reigns. I, on receiving
My rights, e'en now am ready, from this land
To send the troops, and in my palace rule
For an appointed time, then yield again
The empire to my Brother, nor lay waste
My country, nor the scaling-ladder plant
Against yon turrets: yet will I attempt
To do all this, if justice be denied me.
I call the Gods to witness these assertions:
That tho' each solemn contract on my part
Hath been perform'd, I from my native land
By lawless force am driven. I have collected
No specious words, O Mother, to adorn
Truths which with equal force must strike the wise
And the illiterate, if I judge aright.

CHORUS.

To me, although I in a Grecian realm
Have not been nurtur'd, thou appear'st to speak
With much discretion.

ETEOCLES.

If, in their ideas
Of excellence and wisdom, all concurr'd,
No strife had e'er perplex'd the human race.
But now, among the tribes of men, are Fit,
And Right, and fair Equality, mere names,
In real life no longer to be found.
To you, O Mother, I without concealment

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Will speak my sentiments; (9) I would ascend
The starry paths whence bursts the orient Sun,
And plunge beneath the central earth, to win

(9) The late Bishop Warburton, and other modern Critics, having particularly noticed the resemblance between this passage and the following lines in the first part of Shakespeare's Henry the Fourth,

" By heav'n methinks it were an easie leap,
" To pluck bright Honour from the pale-fac'd moon,
" Or dive into the bottom of the deep,
" Where fadom-line could never touch the ground,
" And pluck up drowned Honour by the locks,
" So he that could redeem her thence might wear
" Without co-rival all her dignities.
" But out upon this half-pac'd fellowship!"

it being generally supposed, that Shakespeare was an utter stranger to the Greek, and had very little knowledge of the Latin language; it may not be unacceptable to the reader, to see the French and English translations of the correspondent lines extant at the time he wrote: the former I have extracted from the quotation of it in Plutarch's treatise on Fraternal Love, as it stands in Amyott's version of that author's works, printed at Paris in 1574.

" Je monterois en l'estoillé sejour
" Du clair Solliell ou commence le jour,
" Et descendrois dessoubs la terre basse,
" Si je pouvois acquerir par audace
" La Royauté souveraine des Dieux."

In the English, which is rendered with a very inferior degree of success, the spirit, and even the meaning, of the original have in a great measure perished.

" If I could rule or raigne in heaven above,
" And eeke command in depth of darksome hell,
" No toil ne travel shoul my sprites abashe,
" To take the way unto my restless will
" To climbe aloft, nor down for to descend."

The edition of Mr. George Gascoigne's works, whence I transcribed this, bears date 1575; but the translation of the Phœnissæ, by the title of Jocasta, which is the joint production of him and Mr. Francis Kinwelmersh, is said in the title to have been presented by them at Grayes-Inne, in the year 1566, and often deviates widely from the original for whole scenes together.

" Endeavouring my dreaded name to raise
" Above the moon,"

occurs in Spencer's Fairy Queen, L. 2, c. 8, st. 58.

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Empire the greatest of th' immortal Powers.
I therefore will not yield up such a good
To any other, but for my own use
Retain it, O my Mother: for of manhood
Devoid is he who tamely bears the loss
Of what he prizes most, and in its stead
Accepts some mean exchange. Yet more, it shames me
That he who proudly comes, with arms to lay
Our country waste, his wishes should obtain.
For this would be to Thebes a foul reproach,
If trembling at Mycene's spear, I gave
To him my sceptre. Thus array'd in mail
He ought not to negotiate terms of peace.
For all that by the sword our haughty foes
Hope to exact, might gentle words procure.
If such his pleasure, he on other terms
Shall be permitted in this land to dwell;
But never can I willingly forego
That one great object, nor while sovereign power
Is yet within my reach, will I e'er stoop
To be his vassal: rather come, ye flames,
Ye falchions; let the warrior steed be harness'd,
With brazen chariots cover all the field,
I never will surrender up my throne.
(10) Since if we must o'erleap the narrow bounds

(10) "Suetonius relates, that Julius Cæsar had these verses frequently in his mouth. Cicero has translated them in his Offices, and Dionys. Halicarnass. given the purport of them. But no man will be shocked at this speech, who observes that the Poet himself immediately expresses his disapprobation of it, his own opinion and ideas of justice being usually ascribed to the Chorus: which may be observed in a thousand passages. It becomes an imitator to put impious speeches into the parts of impious men, provided he consult the interests of sound morality by means of some other personage of more unblemished character, as the Choruses usually are." BARNES.

Language similar to this,

"Pro regno velim
"Patriam, Penates, Conjugem flammis dare
"Imperia pretio quolibet constant bene."

is by Seneca put into the mouth of Polynices.

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Of justice, for an empire, to transgress
Were glorious; we in every point beside
Are bound to act as virtue's rules enjoin.

CHORUS.

No ornaments of speech to evil deeds
Are due, for Justice hates such borrow'd charms.

JOCASTA.

Believe me, O Eteocles my Son,
Old age is not by wretchedness alone
Attended: more discreetly than rash youth
Experience speaks. Why dost thou woo Ambition,
That most malignant Goddess? O forbear!
For she's a foe to Justice, and hath enter'd
Full many a mansion, many a prosperous city,
Nor left them till in ruin she involves
All those who harbour her: yet this is she
On whom thou doat'st. 'Twere better, O my Son,
To cultivate Equality, who joins
Friends, cities, heroes in one stedfast league;
For by the laws of nature, thro' the world
Equality was stablished: but the wealthy
Finds in the poorer man a constant foe;
Hence bitter enmity derives its source.
Equality, among the human race,
Measures, and weights, and numbers hath ordain'd:
Both the dark orb of night and radiant sun
Their annual circuits equally perform;
Each, free from envy, to the other yields
Alternately; thus day and night afford
Their services to man. Yet wilt not thou
Be satisfied to keep an equal portion
Of these domains, and to thy Brother give
His due. Where then is justice? such respect
As sober reason disapproves, why pay'st thou
To Empire, to oppression crown'd with triumph?
To be a public spectacle thou deem'st
Were honourable. 'Tis but empty pride.

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When thou hast much already, why submit
To toils unnumber'd? what's superfluous wealth,
But a mere name? Sufficient to the wise
Is competence: for man possesses nought
Which he can call his own. Tho' for a time
What bounty the indulgent Gods bestow
We manage, they resume it at their will:
Unstable riches vanish in a day.
Should I to thee th' alternative propose
Either to reign, or save thy native land,
Could'st thou reply, that thou hadst rather reign?
But if he conquer, and the Argive spears
O'erpower the squadrons who from Cadmus spring,
Thou wilt behold Thebes taken, wilt behold
Our captive virgins ravish'd by the foe:
That empire which thou seek'st, will prove the bane
Of thy lov'd country; yet thou still persist'st
In mischievous ambition's wild career.
Thus far to thee.—And now to you I speak,
O Polynices; favours most unwise
Are those Adrastus hath on you bestow'd,
And with misjudging fury are you come
To spread dire havoc o'er your native land.
If you (which may the righteous Gods avert!)
This city take, how will you rear the trophies
Of such a battle? how, when you have laid
Your country waste, th' initiatory rites
Perform, and slay the victims? on the banks
Of Inachus display'd, with what inscription
Adorn the spoils? "From blazing Thebes these shields
"Hath Polynices won, and to the Gods
"Devoted." Never, O my Son, thro' Greece
May you obtain such glory. But if you
Are vanquish'd, and Eteocles prevail;
To Argos, leaving the ensanguin'd field
Strewn with unnumber'd corses of the slain,
How can you flee for succour? 'twill be said

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By some malignant tongue; " A curst alliance
" Is this which, O Adrastus, thou hast form'd:
" We to the nuptials of one virgin owe
" Our ruin." You are hastening, O my Son,
Into a twofold mischief: losing all
That you attempt, and causing your brave friends
To perish. O my Sons, this wild excess
Of rage, with joint concurrence, lay aside.
By equal folly when two chiefs inspir'd,
To battle rush, dire mischief must ensue.

CHORUS.

Avert these woes, and reconcile the sons
Of Oedipus, ye Gods.

ETEOCLES.

No strife of words
Is ours, O Mother; we but waste the time,
And all your care avails not. For no peace
Can we conclude on any other terms
Than those already nam'd, that I, still wielding
The sceptre, shall be monarch of this land:
Then leave me to myself, and cease to urge
These tedious admonitions. As for thee,
O Polynices, from these walls depart,
Or thou shalt die.

POLYNICES.

By whom? who can be found
Invulnerable enough, with reeking sword
To strike me dead, yet 'scape the self-same fate?

ETEOCLES.

Beside thee, and not distant far he stands.
Seest thou this arm?

POLYNICES.

I see it: but wealth makes
Its owners timid, and too fond of life.

ETEOCLES.

Art thou come hither with a numerous host
'Gainst him thou count'st a dastard in the field?

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POLYNICES.

A cautious general's better than a bold.

ETEOCLES.

Thou on that compact, which preserves thy life,
Too haughtily presum'st.

POLYNICES.

Again I claim
The sceptre and my portion of this realm.

ETEOCLES.

Ill-founded is thy claim, for I will dwell
In my own house.

POLYNICES.

Retaining to yourself
More than your share?

ETEOCLES.

The words which I pronounce
Are these; Depart thou from the Theban land.

POLYNICES.

Ye altars of my lov'd paternal Gods —

ETEOCLES.

Which thou art come to plunder —

POLYNICES.

Hear my voice.

ETEOCLES.

What Deity will hear thee, 'gainst thy country
While thus thou wagest war?

POLYNICES.

And ye abodes
Of those two (11) Gods on milk-white coursers borne.

ETEOCLES.

Who hate thee —

POLYNICES.

From the mansions of my Sire
Am I expell'd.

(11) Zethus and Amphion, who, as Barnes observes in his note on this passage, are also called λευκωλενοι, in the introductory speech to the Hercules Distracted of our Author.

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ETEOCLES.

Because thou hither cam'st
Those mansions to destroy.

POLYNICES.

Thence was I driven
With foul injustice. O ye Powers Divine!

ETEOCLES.

Go to Mycene; there, and not at Thebes,
Invoke the Gods.

POLYNICES.

You trample on the laws—

ETEOCLES.

Yet am not I like thee my country's foe.

POLYNICES.

Reft of my portion, while you drive me forth
An exile.

ETEOCLES.

Thee moreover will I slay.

POLYNICES.

Hear'st thou what wrongs, my Father, I endure?

ETEOCLES.

Thy actions too have reach'd his ears.

POLYNICES.

And you
My Mother.

ETEOCLES.

Thou thy Mother canst not name
Without a profanation.

POLYNICES.

O thou city!

ETEOCLES.

To Argos haste, and there invoke the pool
Of Lerna.

POLYNICES.

I depart: forbear to grieve
For me, O Mother, but accept my praise.

ETEOCLES.

From these domains avaunt.

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POLYNICES.

Before I go,
Permit me to behold our Sire.

ETEOCLES.

Thou shalt not
Obtain this boon.

POLYNICES.

My virgin Sisters then.

ETEOCLES.

Them too thou ne'er shalt see.

POLYNICES.

Alas! dear Sisters,

ETEOCLES.

Why nam'st thou those to whom thou art most hateful?

POLYNICES.

Joy to my Mother!

JOCASTA.

Have I any cause
For joy, my Son?

POLYNICES.

No longer am I yours.

JOCASTA.

Full many and most grievous are my woes,

POLYNICES.

Because he wrongs me.

ETEOCLES.

Equal are the wrongs
I suffer.

POLYNICES.

Where will you your station take
Before yon turrets?

ETEOCLES.

For what purpose ask
This question?

POLYNICES.

I in battle am resolv'd
To meet and slay you.

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ETEOCLES.

The same wish now fires
My inmost soul.

JOCASTA.

Alas! my Sons, what mean ye?

ETEOCLES.

The fact itself must shew.

JOCASTA.

Will ye not shun
The curses of your Sire?

ETEOCLES.

Perdition seize
On our whole house! soon shall my sword imbrued
With gore, no longer in its scabbard rest.

Exit JOCASTA.

POLYNICES.

Thou soil which nurtur'd me, and every God,
Bear witness, that with insults and with wrongs
O'erwhelm'd, I from my country like a slave,
Not like the son of Oedipus, am driven.
Whate'er thou suffer, O thou city, blame
Not me, but him: for I was loth t' invade
This land, and with reluctance now depart.
Thou too, O Phœbus, mighty King, who guard'st
These streets, ye palaces, my youthful comrades,
Farewell; and, O ye statues of the Gods,
Drench'd with the blood of victims: for I know not
Whether I ever shall accost you more.
But Hope yet sleeps not, and in her I place
My trust, that with Heaven's aid I shall enjoy
The Theban realm, when I have slain this boaster.

[*Exit* POLYNICES.

ETEOCLES.

Leave these domains: a forethought by the Gods
Inspir'd, my Father prompted, when on thee
The name of Polynices, to denote
Abundance of contention, he bestow'd.

[*Exit* ETEOCLES.

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CHORUS.

ODE.

I.

Erst to this land the Tyrian Cadmus came,
When at his feet a Heifer lay,
Who in the meads unyok'd was wont to stray,
Fulfilling Heaven's response well known to fame,
And mark'd the spot where he should dwell:
The oracle announc'd this fruitful ground
For his abode, where from her limpid well,
Fair Dirce spreads a cooling stream around,
And on her banks are vernal blossoms found;
Compress'd by amorous Jove
Here Semele the ruddy Bromius bore,
Whom ivy with luxuriant tendrils strove
In infancy to mantle o'er,
And round his happy brows to spread.
Hence, in Bacchanalian dance,
With light and wanton tread
The Theban nymphs advance,
And matrons all their cares resign,
Gay Votaries to the God of wine.

II.

Mars at the fount its ruthless guardian plac'd,
On scaly folds a Dragon rode,
Wild glar'd his eyes, in vain the waters flow'd,
Nor dar'd the thirsting passenger to taste;
Advancing with undaunted tread
To draw libations for the Powers Divine,
A ponderous stone full on the monster's head
Cadmus discharg'd, then seiz'd and pierc'd his chine
With frequent wounds; so Pallas did injoin:
This done, the teeth he sow'd,
And instantly, dire spectacle, a train
All clad in mail, on earth's torn surface glow'd;
Soon was each hardy warrior slain,
And to the soil which gave him birth

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Join'd once more: a crimson flood
Moisten'd the lap of earth;
By parching winds their blood
Was visited, and still remain
Its marks on the discolor'd plain.

III.

To thee, O Epaphus, the child of Jove,
Sprung from our (12) Grandame Io's love,
I cry'd in a Barbaric strain;
O visit, visit this once favour'd plain
Which thy descendants call their own.
Two Goddesses by countless votaries known,
Proserpina dread Queen who from our birth
Conducts us to the tomb, with Ceres the benign,
E'en she whose foodful shrine
Is throng'd by every denizen of earth,
From earliest days this realm possess'd:
With lambent glories on their front display'd,
O send them to its aid;
Nought can withstand a God's request.

ETEOCLES, CHORUS.

ETEOCLES *to one of his Attendants.*

Go thou, and hither bring Menæceus' son
Creon, the noble brother of Jocasta
My Mother; tell him, on my own affairs,
And on the public interests of the state,
With him I would consult, ere host oppos'd

(12) According to Apollodorus, Io, after her long wanderings, took Epaphus, her son by Jupiter, with her into Ægypt, where she married Telegonus, the King of that country. Epaphus succeeded his Father-in-law in his dominions, and married Memphis, the Daughter of Nilus, by whom he had one Daughter Libya, from whom one of the quarters of the world now called Africa (but by Strabo, and most of the antient Geographical writers, Libya) is generally supposed to have derived its name. The God Neptune was the Father, and Libya the Mother, of Agenor, whose son Cadmus married Harmonia, and founded Thebes, as mentioned in the prologue to this Tragedy: whence it appears that Eteocles and Polynices were nine generations removed from Io.

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To host in battle meet, and launch the spear,
But lo, he is at hand to spare thy feet
The toil of this their errand: I behold him
Approach the palace.

CREON, ETEOCLES, CHORUS.

CREON.

I to every gate
And every centinel, my royal Lord
Have gone in quest of you.

ETEOCLES.

Thee too, I long'd,
O Creon, to behold: for I have found
Treaties for peace all fruitless since I spoke
With Polynices.

CREON.

He, I hear, looks down
With scorn on Thebes, trusting in his ally
Adrastus, and that numerous Argive host.
But we to the decision of the Gods
Must now refer. Most urgent are th' affairs
Of which I come to tell.

ETEOCLES.

What means my friend?
Thy words I comprehend not.

CREON.

From the camp
Of Argos a Deserter came.

ETEOCLES.

To bring
Some recent tidings of what passes there?

CREON.

Their host, he says, array'd in glittering mail,
Will instantly besiege the Theban towers.

ETEOCLES.

The valiant race of Cadmus, from these gates
Must sally forth, to guard their native land.

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CREON.

What mean you? sees not your impetuous youth
Our strength in a false light?

ETEOCLES.

Without the trenches,
To show that we are ready for the combat.

CREON.

Few are the Theban squadrons, but the number
Of theirs is great.

ETEOCLES.

In words I know them brave.

CREON.

The fame of Argos thro' all Greece resounds.

ETEOCLES.

Be of good cheer; I with their corses soon
These fields will cover.

CREON.

With your wishes, mine
Concur: but I foresee that such emprise
Abounds with heaviest dangers.

ETEOCLES.

Be assur'd
I will not coop my host within the walls.

CREON.

On prudent counsels our success depends.

ETEOCLES.

Would'st thou persuade me therefore to attempt
Some other method?

CREON.

Ere you risk our fate
On one decisive battle, have recourse
To all expedients.

ETEOCLES.

What if I rush forth
From ambush, and encounter them by night?

CREON.

Could you return, if worsted, and take shelter
Within these walls?

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ETEOCLES.

Night to both hosts affords
The same impediments; but they fare best
Who give th' assault.

CREON.

'Tis terrible to rush
On danger midst the thickest clouds of darkness.

ETEOCLES.

Shall I then launch the javelin, while they sit
Around the genial board?

CREON.

This might alarm them:
Our business is, to conquer.

ETEOCLES.

Dirce's channel,
Which they must cross in their retreat, is deep.

CREON.

All schemes you can propose are less expedient
Than if you with a prudent caution act.

ETEOCLES.

But what if we with cavalry attack
The Argive camp?

CREON.

On every side the host
With chariots is secur'd.

ETEOCLES.

What then remains
For me to do? must I surrender up
This city to our foes?

CREON.

Not thus; exert
Your wisdom, and deliberate.

ETEOCLES.

What precaution,
Think'st thou, were most discreet?

CREON.

I am inform'd
They have seven Champions.

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ETEOCLES.

What's the task assign'd
For them t' effect? their strength can be but small.

CREON.

To head as many bands, and storm each gate.

ETEOCLES.

How then shall we proceed? for I disdain
To sit inactive.

CREON.

On your part select
Seven warriors who the portals may defend.

ETEOCLES.

O'er squadrons to preside, or take their stand
As single combatants?

CREON.

To lead seven squadrons;
Choosing the bravest.

ETEOCLES.

Well I understand
Thy purpose; to prevent the foe from scaling
The ramparts.

CREON.

Comrades of experience add;
For one man sees not all.

ETEOCLES.

Shall I to valour
Or wisdom give the preference?

CREON.

Join them both:
For one without the other is a thing
Of no account.

ETEOCLES.

It shall be done: Ill march
(13) Into the city, place at every gate

(13) "The Scholiast says; Eteocles here speaks ridiculously, because he was already in the city. But with his permission, and that of all the Critics, I assert, that it is usual for a person who stays all day at

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A chief, as thou hast counsell'd, and the troops
Distribute so that we on equal terms
May with the foe engage. It would be tedious
The name of every warrior to recount,
Just at this moment, when beneath our walls
The enemy is posted. But with speed
I go, that I in action may not prove
A loiterer. May it be my lot to meet
My Brother hand to hand, that with this spear
I midst the lines of battle may transfix
And kill that spoiler, who is come to lay
My country waste. I to thy care entrust
The nuptials of Antigone my Sister
And thy Son Hæmon, if it be my fate
To perish in the combat, and enforce
Our former contract with my dying breath.
Thou art Jocasta's Brother: of what use
Are many words? my Mother in such rank
Maintain, as suits thy honour, and the love
Thou bear'st me. As for my unhappy Sire,
To his own folly are his sufferings due,
Bereft of eye-sight; him I cannot praise,
For by his curses would he slay us both.
One thing have we omitted; of the Seer

" home, though he be in the city, to be spoken of as not having gone " into the city that day. This I mention in a cursory manner, lest the " Poet should be left destitute of that defence he deserves." BARNES. Carmelli nearly copies the above note. Grotius in his preface observes, that it is well known that a palace, though contained in a city, may be distinguished from it. Valkenaer observes, that this is here true in its utmost extent, and that the Acropolis or citadel in which the palace stood, was originally detached from Thebes, which was built on lower ground, till the city became so populous, and its buildings extended themselves so far as to form a junction. Dr. Musgrave echoes the Scholiast, and calls the reading of πολιν extremely absurd, and proposes in its stead πυλων, and inserts the word ambitum in his Latin version: which, in whatever point of view we consider the matter, may be detrimental, and cannot, I apprehend, be the least improvement to the context. Brunck, however, sets Aldus and all the manuscripts at defiance, and boldly inserts πυλων in his edition.

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Tiresias, to enquire, if he have ought
Of Heaven's obscure responses to disclose.
Thy Son, Menœceus from his Grandsire nam'd,
To fetch the Prophet hither, will I send,
O Creon, for he gladly will converse
With thee: but I so scornfully have treated,
E'en in his presence, the whole Soothsayer's art,
That he abhors me. But I, on the city
And thee, O Creon, this injunction lay;
If I prove stronger, suffer not the corse
Of Polynices in this Theban realm
To be interr'd: let death be the reward
Of him who scatters dust o'er his remains,
Although he be the dearest of my friends.
Thus far to thee — But to my followers this
I add; bring forth my shield, my helm, my greaves,
And radiant mail, that by victorious Justice
Accompanied, I instantly may rush
Amidst the fray which waits me. But to Prudence,
Who best of all th' immortal Powers protects
The interests of her votaries, let us pray
That she this city would from ruin save.

[*Exit* ETEOCLES.

CHORUS.

O D E.

I.

How long, stern Mars, shall scenes of death inspire
Aversion to the feasts gay Bacchus holds?
Why join'st thou not the beauteous virgin choir
Whose heaving bosoms love's first warmth unfolds,
Thy hair's loose ringlets waving o'er thy face,
Pleas'd on some amorous theme the lute t' employ
Dear to the Graces, dear to social joy?
But thou, a foe to the devoted race

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Of (14) Thebé, lead'st these Argives to their fields
Forming dire preludes for a tragic dance;
Nor with the God whose hand the thyrsus wields,
In dappled skins of hinds dost thou advance;
Exulting in the thong and harness'd steeds,
Thou driv'st thy chariot o'er Ismenos' meads,
And 'gainst th' invaders, in each Theban breast
Infusing equal rancor, prompt'st that band,
Seed of the Dragon's teeth, to take their stand;
These rush to guard the walls, and those t' invest.
Inhuman Goddess, Discord, to the Kings
Of Labdacus's house a train of misery brings,

II.

With sacred foliage ever clad, ye groves
Of fam'd Cithæron, whose steep cliffs abound
With sylvan game, thou mount, where Dian loves
To urge thro' drifted snows the rapid hound,
Thou ought'st not to have nourish'd in thy shade
Jocasta's Son; then better had he died
When cast forth from the palace, on thy side
In glittering vest the royal child was laid:
Nor ought the Sphynx, the curse of these domains,
That subtle virgin, to have wing'd her way
From thy proud heights with inauspicious strains;
Arm'd with four talons clench'd to rend her prey
These walls approaching, high into the air
The progeny of Cadmus did she bear,
By Pluto sent from hell, 'gainst Thebes she came.
New woes the Sons of Oedipus await,
Again this city feels the scourge of fate,
For virtue springs not from the couch of shame;
Fruits of th' incestous womb, their Sire's disgrace
Are these devoted Youths, accurst and spurious race.

(14) "Thebe was the Daughter of Asopus, and wife of Zethus, and "from her the city of Thebes derived its name, according to Apollodorus "and Pausanias. See also the first verse of Pindar's first Isthmian "Ode." MUSGRAVE. The above interpretation of Dr. Musgrave is confirmed by Brunck.

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III.

Erst thy teeming soil gave birth,
(As in barbaric accents was made known
To us by the loud voice of fame,)
O Thebes, to that illustrious brood of Earth,
Sprung from the teeth of that slain Dragon sown,
Thy realm their prowess did adorn.
In honour of (15) Harmonia's bridal morn,
To this favour'd region came

(15) The marriage of Cadmus with Harmonia, the Daughter of Mars and Venus, is recorded by Hesiod in his Generation of the Gods, and many other antient Poets and Historians. Pausanias in particular mentions in his Laconica, the Gods attending those nuptials, and bestowing their gifts on the wedded pair; and, in his Bœotica, he speaks of the Muses themselves celebrating these espousals with their songs. The following lines, extracted from the third book of the Dionysiaca of Nonnus, a native of Ægypt, who flourished in the fifth century, are part of the speech of the Crow to Cadmus:

Θερμος ερως καλεει σε· τι νυμφιε νωθρος οδευεις;
Ηδυς ος ιμειρεντος Αδωνιδος εκλεο γαμους·
Ηδυς ο Βυβλιαδεσσιν ομωλακα πατριδα ναιων·
Ηλιτον· ου γαρ ειδες Αδωνιδος, ου χθονα Βυβλου
Εδρακες, ηχι φιλει Χαριτων δομος, ηχι χορευει
Ασσυριη Κυθερεια και ου φυγοδικος Αθηνη·
Τιμωμενην δε γαμοισι τιθηνητειραν ερωτων
Πειθω σωφρον εχεις, ου Αρτεμιν· ισχεο μοχθων,
Αρμονιης αιτοιτο, και Ευμενιδων λαβε ταυρον.

Love lights his torch, and bids thee come away;
Thou slothful Bridegroom, whence this cold delay?
Favour'd of Heaven, who midst th' enchanting scene
Where young Adonis wooed the Cyprian Queen,
Dwell'st near the gates of Byblis.—But in thee
I am mistaken: for thou ne'er didst see
Adonis' fount, and Byblis' land, where reign
The Graces worshipp'd in a stately fane,
Where in the dance Assyrian Venus moves,
And Pallas frowns not on their wedded loves:
Not Dian, but Persuasion, who the Bride
Adorns with smiles auspicious, is thy guide,
Cherish'd by her, man's amorous flames increase,
Long hast thou roam'd; thy labours now shall cease:
Harmonia's plighted hand with joy receive,
And to the Bull's embrace Europa leave.

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All the celestial choir,
What time the turrets, which this grateful hand
Impregnable by human force esteems,
Rear'd by the harp, and not the artist's hand,
Obedient to Amphion's lyre,
Arose amidst the fruitful meads
Where gentle Dirce leads
Her current, and Ismenos' waters yield
Abundant verdure to the field
Encompass'd by their streams.
She, whom a heifer's horned front disguis'd,
Io, was Mother to the Theban kings:
Successively, each bliss by mortals priz'd,
Hath to this city given renown,
And hither still fair Victory brings
The noblest meed of war, the laurel's deathless crown.

TIRESIAS, MENÆCEUS, CREON, CHORUS.

TIRESIAS, *to his Daughter* MANTO.

Lead on; for thou, my Daughter, to the feet
Of thy blind Father, prov'st an eye as sure
As to the mariners the polar star.
Place me where I on level ground may tread,
And go before, lest we both fall: thy Sire
Is feeble. In thy virgin hand preserve
Those oracles which I in former days
Receiv'd, when from the feather'd race I drew
My auguries, and in the sacred chair
Of prophecy was seated. Say, thou youth
Menœceus son of Creon, thro' the city
How far must I proceed before I reach
Thy Father, for my knees can scarce support me,

This Poet has bestowed some thousands of verses on the history of Cadmus and Harmonia, and introduced not only the Gods, but all nature, and even things inanimate, as bearing a part in the joy occasioned by their union.

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And tho' full oft I raise these aching feet,
I seem to gain no ground.

CREON.

Be of good cheer,
Tiresias, for with well-directed step
Already have you reach'd your friend. My Son
Support him: for the chariot, and the foot
Of an infirm old man, is wont to need
The kind assistance of some guiding hand.

TIRESIAS.

No matter. I am here: why with such haste,
O Creon, call'st thou me?

CREON.

I have not yet
Forgotten; but till your exhausted strength
Can be recover'd after the fatigue
Of your long march, take breath.

TIRESIAS.

With wearied step
I yesterday came hither from the realm
Of Athens, for (16) for *there* also was a war
Against Eumolpus, o'er whose troops I caus'd
The dauntless race of Cecrops to prevail:

(16) It is by no means uncommon for Poets to strain a point of Chronology in order to extoll the atchievements of their countrymen. By referring to Pausanias, we find that Neptune was the father, and Chione Daughter of Boreas and Orithya, the Mother of Eumolpus. Apollodorus is more circumstantial, or at least more conformable to Euripides, in his account of the war here spoken of: he informs us, that Eumolpus brought a numerous army from Thrace to assist the Eleusinians, when they attacked the Athenians during the reign of Erectheus, who having consulted the oracle, was promised that he should prevail over the enemy on condition of his sacrificing one of his Daughters; his compliance with this hard alternative, in order to save his country, has been commemorated as well by historians and orators, as by our Tragic Bard in the 278th line of his Ion. But the Scholiast has very properly observed, that this event was prior to the war of Thebes by no less than four generations. The Athenians are also in this speech called Cecropidæ, or the descendants of Cecrops, although Cecrops was the son and successor of Erectheus.

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Hence I possess the golden crown thou seest,
As a first fruit selected from the spoils
Of foes discomfited.

CREON.

That crown I deem
An omen of success. You know the storm
Which threatens us from yonder Argive host,
And what a mighty conflict now impends
O'er the inhabitants of Thebes. Our King
Eteocles, in brazen arms array'd,
To face Mycene's squadrons is gone forth,
But hath with me a strict injunction left,
To learn of you what can with most effect
By us be done, the city to preserve.

TIRESIAS.

This mouth, I, on Eteocles' account
Still closing, would for ever have suppress'd
Heaven's dread response; but will to thee unfold it
Since 'tis thy wish to hear; this land, O Creon,
Hath been diseas'd since Laius 'gainst the will
Of Heaven became a Father, and begot
The wretched Oedipus, his Mother's Husband,
Whose eyes, torn out by his own hand, the Gods
Wisely ordain'd should to all Greece afford
A dread example; which, in striving long
To cover from the knowledge of the world,
His Sons, as if they thought to have escap'd
Heaven's eye, with a presumptuous folly sinn'd:
For to their Father yielding no respect,
Nor loosing him from prison, they embitter'd
The anguish of a miserable man:
At once afflicted by disease and shame,
Those horrid execrations he pour'd forth
Against them both. What have I left undone,
Or what unsaid, tho' all my zeal but serv'd
To make me hated by th' unnatural sons
Of Oedipus? but by each other's hand,

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Them soon shall death o'ertake, O Creon; heaps
On heaps of carnage cover all the plain,
And Argive weapons mingling with the shafts
Of Cadmus' race, thro' the whole Theban land
Cause bitter plaints. Thou too, O wretched city,
Shalt be destroy'd, unless my counsels meet
With one who will obey them. What were most
To be desir'd, were this: that none who spring
From Oedipus should here reside, or hold
The scepter of this land, for they, impell'd
By the malignant Demons, will o'erthrow
The City. But since evil thus prevails
O'er good, one other method yet remains
To save us. But unsafe were it for me
Such truths to utter, and, on bitter terms,
Must they whom Fate selects, their country heal.
I go, farewell. (17) I, as a private man
Shall suffer, if necessity ordain,
With multitudes, the evils which impend:
For how can I escape the general doom?

CREON.

Here tarry, O my venerable friend.

TIRESIAS.

Detain me not.

CREON.

Stay; wherefore would you fly?

(17) At the second siege of Thebes, when the city was taken by the Epigoni, or sons of the seven Chiefs slain in the war which is the subject of the Tragedy before us, Tiresias, according to Pausanias, died suddenly, in an extreme old age, on the road, as he was drinking at a fountain, after being seized and carried away by the victors: his Daughter Manto, the same Historian adds, was sent by the Argives to Colophon, where she married Rhacias a Cretan, by whom she had a son named Mopsus, who inherited her skill in Divination. Conon, and Tzetzes, the Greek Commentator of Lycophron, ascribe to Mopsus a more illustrious paternal origin, and call Apollo his Father. Virgil represents Manto as coming to Italy, and having by the river Tiber a Son called Ocnus, the founder of the city of Mantua, so named after his Mother.

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TIRESIAS.

It is thy Fortune which from thee departs,
And not Tiresias.

CREON.

By what means, inform me,
Can Thebes with its inhabitants be sav'd?

TIRESIAS.

Tho' such thy wish at present, thou ere long
Wilt change thy purpose.

CREON.

How can I be loth
To save my country?

TIRESIAS.

Art thou anxious then
To hear the truth?

CREON.

What ought I to pursue
With greater zeal?

TIRESIAS.

Thou instantly shall hear
The oracles Heaven sends me to unfold:
But first assure me where Menœceus is,
Who led me hither.

CREON.

At your side he stands.

TIRESIAS.

Far hence let him retire, while I disclose
To thee the aweful mandate of the Gods.

CREON.

My Son with th' utmost strictness will observe
The silence you injoin.

TIRESIAS.

Is it thy will
That in his presence I to thee should speak?

CREON.

Of aught that could preserve his native land
He with delight would hear.

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TIRESIAS.

Then, to the means
Which thro' my oracles are pointed out,
Yield due attention; for by acting thus
Ye shall preserve this city, where the race
Of Cadmus dwell; thou, in thy country's cause
Thy Son Menæceus art ordain'd to slay:
Since thou on me importunately call'st
The dread behest of Fortune to unfold.

CREON.

What say you? how unwelcome are these words,
O aged man!

TIRESIAS.

I only speak of things
Just as they are; and add, thou must perform
Th' injunction.

CREON.

How much evil have you utter'd
In one short moment!

TIRESIAS.

Tho' to thee unwelcome,
Yet to thy country fame and health.

CREON.

Your words
I hear not, nor your purpose comprehend:
The city I abandon to its fate.

TIRESIAS.

His purpose he retracts, and is no longer
(18) The man he was.

CREON.

Depart in peace; I need not
Your oracles.

(18) The expression of Ανηρ οδ' ουκ ετ' αυτος, rendered by the Latin interpreters, vir iste non amplius idem est, is in my copy of King's edition thus interpreted in a manuscript note of Mr. De Missy's, "ita Gallicè possis "dicere, cet homme-là n'est plus lui, pro, cet homme-là n'est plus le "même." The English language allows the same mode of speaking, and "this man is no longer himself" occurs among our ordinary phrases.

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TIRESIAS.

Hath truth then lost its merit,
Because thou art unhappy?

CREON.

By those knees,
You I implore, and by those hoary locks.

TIRESIAS.

Why sue to me? the ills 'gainst which thou pray'st
Are not to be avoided.

CREON.

Peace! divulge not
In Thebes these tidings.

TIRESIAS.

Dost thou bid me act
Unjustly? them I never will suppress.

CREON.

What is your purpose, to destroy my son?

TIRESIAS.

Let others see to that: I only speak
As Heaven ordains.

CREON.

But whence was such a curse
On me and on my progeny deriv'd?

TIRESIAS.

Well hast thou ask'd this question, and a field
For our debate laid open: in yon den,
Where erst the guard of Dirce's fountain lay,
That earth-born Dragon, must the youth pour forth
His blood for a libation to the Ground,
And expiate by his death the antient hate
To Cadmus borne by Mars, who thus avenges
The progeny of Earth the Dragon slain:
This done, the God of Battles will become
Your champion; and when Earth shall, in the stead
Of her lost fruit the Dragon, have receiv'd
The fruit of that heroic race who sprung
From its own teeth, and human blood for blood,

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Propitious shall ye find the teeming soil,
Which erst, instead of wheat, produc'd a crop
Of radiant helms. Die then some victim must
Who from the jaws of that slain Dragon sprung:
But thou alone in Thebes remain'st who thence
Deriv'st thy birth unmix'd, both by thy Sire
And by the female line, thence too descend
Thy generous sons: but Hæmon must not bleed,
Because he is espous'd, nor in a state
Of pure celibacy doth still remain,
For he possesses an affianc'd bride,
Altho' he be a stranger to her bed.
But, for the city, if this tender youth
Shall as a chosen victim be devoted,
He by his death will save his native land,
Will cause Adrastus and his Argive host
With anguish to return, before their eyes
Placing grim death, and add renown to Thebes.
From these two fortunes make thy choice of one,
Whether thy son or city thou wilt save.
Thou hast heard all I had to say in answer
To thy enquiries. Daughter lead me home.
Unwise is he who practises the art
Of divination; for if he announce
Evils to come, he is abhorr'd by those
Who hear him; but, thro' pity, if he utter
Untruths that please, he sins against the Gods.
Phœbus alone, who cannot fear the hate
Of man, his own responses should pronounce.

[*Exit* TIRESIAS.

CHORUS.

What means this silence? wherefore hast thou clos'd
Thy mouth, O Creon? but I too am smitten
With equal terror.

CREON.

How can a reply

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Be made to such proposal? what I mean
To say, is evident. To such a pitch
Of woe may I ne'er come, as to resign
My son to bleed for Thebes! In all mankind
The love they bear their children is as strong
As that of life; nor is there any Father
Who for a victim will yield up his Son.
May no man praise me on such terms as slaying
Those I begot! I stand prepar'd to die,
For I am ripe in years, and would for Thebes
Make due atonement with my streaming gore.
But, O my son, ere the whole city know,
Regardless of that frantic Prophet's voice,
Fly from this land, fly with your utmost speed;
He will proclaim the oracle to those
Who wield the sceptre, or lead forth our troops
To battle, visiting each Chieftain station'd
At the seven gates: if haply we with him
Can be beforehand, you may yet be sav'd;
But if you loiter, we are both undone,
And you must die.

MENÆCEUS.

But whither, to what city,
What hospitable stranger speed my flight?

CREON.

As far as possible from these domains.

MENÆCEUS.

You ought to name a place for my retreat,
And I must execute what you command.

CREON.

Passing thro' Delphi—

MENÆCEUS.

Whither, O my Sire,
Must I proceed?

CREON.

To the Ætolian land.

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MENÆCEUS.

But whither thence shall I direct my course?

CREON.

Next to Thesprotia.

MENÆCEUS.

(19) Where Dodona rears
Her hallow'd grove.

CREON.

Full well you comprehend
My meaning.

MENÆCEUS.

There what safeguard shall I find?

CREON.

Its tutelary God your steps will guide.

MENÆCEUS.

But how shall I with treasures be supplied?

CREON.

To you will I convey abundant gold.

MENÆCEUS.

Discreetly have you spoken, O my Sire.

CREON.

Now leave me.

MENÆCEUS.

To your Sister I would go
I mean Jocasta, who first nurtur'd me
In infancy, when of my Mother reft
An orphan I became; one fond adieu

(19) Æschylus, in his Prometheus, speaks in like manner of the oracle and fane of Thesprotian Jove at Dodona; though it must be confessed Dodona is not in Thesprotia, but as Strabo expresses it, ὁμόρους, "bordering on Thesprotia," being situated in Molossia, another district of Epirus. In Eustathius and Stephanus Byzantinus, we meet with three different conjectures in regard to the derivation of the name Dodona, which they say owes its origin either to a Daughter of Jupiter and Europa, or one of the Nymphs the Daughters of Oceanus, or, lastly, to a river in Epirus, called Dodon.

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To her I fain would bid, and of (20) my life
Then take due care.

CREON.

But go, or you will frustrate
All I can do to save you. [*Exit* CREON.

MENŒCEUS.

With what art,
O Virgins, have I sooth'd my Father's fears,
By specious words (my promise to accomplish)
Deceiving him who sends me hence, to rob
The City of those fortunes which await her,
And brand me with a coward's hateful name.
In an old man, such weakness claims excuse;
But I should sin beyond all hopes of pardon,
If I betray'd the land which gave me birth.
I go, to save this city; be assur'd,
Such are the terms on which I yield up life,
Content to perish in my country's cause.
If they whom Heaven's oracular response
Leaves at full liberty, by no decrees
Of the resistless Destinies impell'd,
Maintain their ground in battle, nothing loth
To bleed, the champions of their native land,
Before yon turrets; base were it in me,
If proving faithless to my Sire, my Brother,
And country, like a dastard, I should speed
My flight from these domains; wheree'er I live,
Shame would o'ertake me. From the starry pole
May Jove forefend, and Mars, in human gore
Exulting, who the sceptre of this realm
Erst gave to Kings, Earth's progeny, the seed
Of that slain Dragon's teeth. But I will go,
Ascend the topmost pinnacles, and piercing
My breast, where they o'erhang the Dragon's cave,
The very spot the Seer describ'd, redeem

(20) The reading of ὧν ἔμ', instead of ὧνπερ, is adopted in King's edition, and mentioned by Dr. Musgrave in his note, as being supported by no less authority than that of eight manuscripts.

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My country from its foes. I have pronounc'd
Th' irrevocable word. But, by my death,
On Thebes no sordid present to bestow,
I haste, and from these mischiefs will set free
The groaning land. Would every man exert
To their full stretch his talents to promote
The public interest; every state expos'd
To fewer ills, hereafter might be blest.

[*Exit* MENŒCEUS.

CHORUS.

ODE.

I.

O winged Fiend, who from the Earth
And an infernal Viper drew'st thy birth,
Thou cam'st, thou cam'st, to bear away,
Amidst incessant groans, thy prey,
And harrass Cadmus' race,
Thy frantic pinions did resound,
Thy fangs impress'd the ghastly wound,
Thou ruthless monster with a virgin's face:
What youths from Dirce's fount were borne aloof,
While thou didst utter thy discordant song,
The Furies haunted every roof,
And o'er these walls sat Slaughter brooding long.
Sure from some God whose breast no mercy knew,
Their source impure these horrors drew.
From house to house, the cries
Of matrons did resound,
And wailing maidens rent the skies
With frequent shrieks loud as the thunder's burst,
Oft as the Sphynx accurst,
Some youth, whom in the Theban streets she found,
Bore high in air; all gaz'd in wild affright,
Till she vanished from their sight.

II.

At length the Pythian God's command
Brought Oedipus to this ill-fated land;

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Each heart did then with transport glow,
Tho' now his name renew their woe:
By angry Heaven beguil'd,
When he th' enigma had explain'd,
His Mother for a Bride he gain'd;
With incest hence the city was defil'd.
Fresh murders soon his curses will inspire,
Urging his Sons to an unpatural strife.
We that heroic youth admire
Who in his country's cause resigns his life,
He, tho' his Father Creon wail his fate,
With triumph in the fell debate,
Will crown these sevenfold towers.
Of Heaven I ask no more
Than that such children may be ours:
Thy aid, O Pallas, in th' adventurous deed
Caus'd Cadmus to succeed,
And slay the Dragon, whose envenom'd gore
Was sprinkled on these rocks; by Heaven's command
Hence some pest still haunts the land.

MESSENGER, CHORUS.

MESSENGER.

Who at the portals of the regal dome
Is station'd? open, bring Jocasta forth
From her apartment. Ho! advance at length,
And listen to my voice, illustrious Wife
Of Oedipus. No longer grieve, nor shed,
The piteous tear.

JOCASTA; MESSENGER, CHORUS.

JOCASTA.

Come you, my friend, to bring
Sad tidings of Eteocles the slain,
Beside whose shield you ever stood to guard
The warrior from the javelins of the foe?
With what important message are you charg'd?
Is my Son dead, or lives he? tell me all.

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MESSENGER.

He lives, that fear be banish'd.

JOCASTA.

Are our walls
By their seven towers secur'd?

MESSENGER.

They still remain
Unshaken, and the city is not sack'd.

JOCASTA.

Have they withstood the perilous assault
From th' Argive combatants?

MESSENGER.

The fate of battle
Is just decided: the intrepid race
Of Cadmus o'er Mycene's host prevail'd.

JOCASTA.

Yet one thing more; I by th' immortal Powers
Conjure you, tell me whether you know aught
Of Polynices, for I wish to learn
If he yet live.

MESSENGER.

At present both thy Sons
Are living.

JOCASTA.

Bliss attend you: but inform me
How ye the troops of Argos from the gates,
Beleaguer'd in the turrets, could repell?
That to my home with speed I may return,
The blind and aged Oedipus to sooth
With the glad tidings that this city's saved.

MESSENGER.

Since Creon's Son, who for his country died,
Mounting the topmost pinnacles, transpierc'd
His bosom with the falchion, and became
The generous Saviour of his native land:
Eteocles distributed seven cohorts
At the seven gates, and to each band assign'd

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Its leader; by their vigilance to check
The furious onset of the Argive host:
He station'd a reserve of horse to succour
The horse, and infantry with bucklers arm'd
Behind the infantry, that where the walls
Were with the greatest violence assail'd
Fresh strength might be at hand. As on our turrets
We stood exalted, and o'erlook'd the plain,
The Argive host we saw, with silver shields
Conspicuous, from Teumessus' mount descend:
Over their trenches in their rapid march
Soon vaulting, to the city they drew near,
While Pæans, mingled with the trumpet's sound,
At the same instant thro' their ranks were heard,
And on the Theban walls. His squadron, first,
By their rais'd targets skreen'd, which cast around
A horrid shade, to the Nëitian gate
Parthenopæus led, the daring Son
Of Atalanta; on his central shield,
His Mother's trophy, the Ætolian boar
Pierc'd by that huntress with unerring shaft,
The chief display'd. Amphiareus the Seer
March'd to the gates of Prætus, on his car
Conveying victims, no unseemly pride
In his armorial bearings was express'd,
But on his modest buckler there appear'd
A vacant (21) field. At the Ogygian portals

(21) From the usage adopted by the Heroes of Homer, and the most antient times, of recording on their shields either their own exploits, or those of their ancestors, modern armorial bearings are deduced by Guillim and other writers who have treated the subject of Heraldry. Amphiareus wearing his shield entirely plain, is accounted for in the same manner by Æschylus, from whom this narrative of the messenger is in a great measure imitated,

Ου γαρ δοκει αριστος αλλ' εστιν θελειν,
for his generous soul
Wishes to be, not to appear the best. POTTER.

Helenor is introduced in Virgil with a shield entirely destitute of ornament on a different account, as being the spurious son of a Lydian king

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The fierce Hippomedon maintain'd his stand,
By this atchievment was his orbed targe
Distinguished; Argus with unnumber'd eyes,
A part of which, awakening fresh from sleep,
Op'd with the rising stars, meantime the rest
He with the setting constellations clos'd;
As more distinctly when the chief was slain
Might be discern'd. But Tydeus next his post
Before the Homolæan gate maintain'd,
With a huge lion's bristly hide his shield
Was cover'd, in his better hand a torch
He, like Prometheus of the Titans' race,
Brandish'd to fire the city. To the gate
From Dirce's fountain nam'd, his marshall'd troops
Thy son the furious Polynices led;
The rapid mares of Potnia, (the device
Portray'd upon his target) seem'd to leap
With panic terrors smitten, and grown frantic,
All crowded in a circle to the rim.
Equal in courage to the God of War,
Next with his cohort to Electra's gate
Rush'd Capaneus, the ensign wrought in steel
Upon his buckler, was an earth-born Giant,
Whose shoulders carried a whole city torn
With levers from its basis, to denote
The menac'd fate of Thebes. Adrastus' self

by Lycimnia, a slave, and consequently having no right whatever to any such distinction.

Ense levis nudo, parmâque inglorius albâ.
"Slight were his arms, a sword and silver shield,
"No marks of honour charg'd its empty field." DRYDEN.

His Mother availing herself of the favour of her royal Paramour, acted contrary to the laws in sending her son to the war,

"A privilege which none but freemen share."

for so Dryden paraphrases vetitis armis, but did not encourage him to usurp a distinction appropriated to those who either inherited armorial bearings from their ancestors, or had entitled themselves by their own valour to assume them.

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At the (22) seventh gate appear'd; on his left arm
The Hydra with an hundred snakes begirt,
Which fill'd the convex surface of his shield,
That badge of Argive pride, the warrior bore;
From Thebes, surrounded by its lofty walls,
The serpents opening their voracious jaws
Convey'd the Sons of Cadmus. Each device
I could observe securely, as I pass'd
Betwixt the leaders of the adverse hosts,
Distinguish'd by the pledge of truce. At first
We at a distance fought with bows and shafts,
And slings and stones; but when our troops obtain'd
An easy conquest in this missile war,
Tydeus, and Polynices thy brave Son,
Both cried at the same instant, "O ye race
"Of Danaus, ere our squadrons are dispers'd
"By weapons from yon lofty turrets hurl'd,
"Why on the portals scruple ye to make
"One resolute assault with all our strength,
"The light-arm'd troops, our horse, and brazen cars?"
Soon as they heard their leader's cheering voice,
None loiter'd, but full many a valiant Argive
Was thro' the brain transpierc'd, while from the walls
Like skilful divers, our expiring friends
Oft threw themselves; the thirsty ground with streams
Of gore they drench'd. Fierce Atalanta's Son,
Not Argos, but Arcadia gave him birth,

(21) The attack of the seventh gate in Æschylus fall to the lot of Polynices: the seven chiefs are in Euripides the same, but differently distributed; we here meet with the Neitian, Prætian, Homolæan, and Electran gate, but not the Ogygyan, or that of Κρουν (rendered in the Latin version Crenæam) named from the fountain Dirce, but in their stead we find in Æschylus that of Boreas or the Northern gate, and that of Minerva Onca, an epithet to that Goddess, of which Jackson has given the following definition in his Chronological Antiquities; "Onca is a "Phœnician and Arabian word, and signifies great or powerful. So Mi-"nerva was the ογκα, the great and powerful Goddess, both of Thebes "and Athens."

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Rush'd like a whirlwind to the gates, and call'd
For flaming brands and axes to destroy:
But Periclimenus, who from the God
Of Ocean sprung, soon quell'd his frantic rage,
Torn from the battlement, a stone, whose mass
Had fill'd a chariot, on his head he threw,
The stripling's auburn hair and crashing skull
It sever'd, and those rosy cheeks defil'd
With gushing blood; to the maternal arms
Of her who twangs the unerring bow, the nymph
Of Mænalon, he never shall return.
But when thy Son Eteocles survey'd
Our triumphs at this gate, the rest with speed
He visited; I follow'd, and beheld
Tydeus attended by a phalanx arm'd
With bucklers, hurling their Ætolian spears
Into the loftiest towers, with such success,
That they constrain'd our fugitives to quit
Their station on the ramparts? but thy Son
Rallied them like a hunter, and collected
Each warrior to resume his post; their fears
Dispell'd, we hasted to another gate.
But in what terms shall I describe the madness
Of Capaneus? he with a ladder came
And boasted that not e'en the lightning launch'd
By Jove's own hand, should hinder him from scaling
The towers, to sack the city. Thus he spoke;
And midst a storm of stones, from step to step
Ascending, still sufficient shelter found
Beneath the huge circumference of his shield;
But as he reach'd the summit of the wall
Jove smote him with a thunderbolt, earth gave
A sound so loud that all were seiz'd with terror;
As from a sling, his scatter'd limbs were thrown,
His blasted tresses mounted to the skies,
On earth his blood was sprinkled, but his hands
And feet were, like Ixion on the wheel,

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Whirl'd with incessant motion, till at length
Down to the ground he fell a smouldering corse.
Soon as Adrastus saw Jove warr'd against him,
He with his Argive host in swift retreat
Again the trenches cross'd: but when our troops
Mark'd the auspicious sign vouchsaf'd by Jove,
They from the gates rush'd forth with brazen cars,
With cavalry in ponderous arms array'd,
And midst the Argive squadrons hurl'd their spears:
Each ill concurr'd to overwhelm the foe,
Death rag'd amongst them, from their chariots thrown
They perish'd, wheels flew off, 'gainst axle crash'd
Axle, and corses were on corses heap'd.
The Theban turrets we this day have sav'd
From ruin, but to the immortal powers,
And them alone, belongs it to decide
Whether auspicious Fortune on this land
Shall smile hereafter.

CHORUS.

In th' embattled field
'Tis glorious to prevail: but were the Gods
More favorably dispos'd, I should enjoy
A greater share of bliss.

JOCASTA.

The Gods and Fortune
Have amply done their part: for both my Sons
Are living, and the city hath escap'd:
Unhappy Creon only seems to reap
The bitter fruits of my accursed nuptials
With Oedipus, for he hath lost his son,
And such event, tho' fortunate for Thebes,
To him is grievous. In your tale proceed.
Say on; what farther have my sons resolv'd?

MESSENGER.

The sequel wave; for all with thee thus far
Goes prosperously.

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JOCASTA.

These words but serve to raise
Suspicion: nothing must be left untold.

MESSENGER.

What would'st thou more than that thy sons are safe?

JOCASTA.

But whether my good fortune will prove lasting
I wish to know.

MESSENGER.

Release me: for thy Son
Is left without his shield-bearer.

JOCASTA.

Some ill
In mystic darkness wrapt you strive to hide.

MESSENGER.

I to these welcome tidings cannot add
Such as would make thee wretched.

JOCASTA.

No way left,
Unless you thro' the air could wing your flight,
Have you to scape me.

MESSENGER.

After this glad message
Why wilt thou not allow me to depart,
Rather than speak of grievous ills? thy Sons
Are both resolv'd on a most impious deed,
Apart from either army to engage
In single combat, to the Argive troops
And the assembled citizens of Thebes
Have they address'd such language as ne'er ought
To reach their ears. Eteocles began,
Above the field high on a tower he stood,
Commanding silence first to be proclaim'd
Thro' all the host, and cried; " O peerless Chiefs
" Of the Achaian land, who, to invade
" This city, from the realms of Danaus come,
" And ye who spring from Cadmus, in the cause

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" Of Polynices, barter not your lives,
" Nor yet on my behalf; I from such dangers
" To save you, with my Brother will engage
" In single combat, and if him I slay
" Here in this palace shall I reign alone,
" But I to him the city will yield up
" If I am vanquish'd: from the bloody strife
" Desisting, ye to Argos (23) shall return
" Nor perish in a foreign land: enough
" Of Thebans too on this ensanguin'd plain
" Lie breathless corses." With these words his speech
The dauntless Chief concluded. From the ranks,
Thy offspring, Polynices, then advanc'd
And the proposal prais'd, while, with a shout,
The Argive and the Theban hosts, who deem'd
Such combat just, their public sanction gave.
Then was the truce agreed on; twixt both hosts
The generals met, and by a solemn oath
Engag'd themselves the compact to fulfill.
In brazen panoply, without delay
The sons of aged Oedipus were clad,
His friends, the noblest Theban youths, equipp'd
The ruler of this land, the Argive chiefs
Arm'd his antagonist, both stood conspicuous
In glittering mail, their looks betray'd no change,
And at each other's breast with frantic rage
They long'd to hurl the spear: meantime their friends
Pass'd by, and with these words their courage rous'd;
" On thee, O Polynices, it depends
" To rear an image of triumphant Jove,
" And add fresh glories to the Argive state."
But to Eteocles they cried; " Thou fight'st
" The battles of thy native land, obtain

(23) " Euripides has here a view to Homer; —— τῶν δὲ τοσσάδε Ἄργος ἔ
" πεσσεῖν. Il. iii. v. 74; and from the same part of Homer's poem, where
" Paris challenges Menelaus to single combat, he hath hither likewise
" transplanted other images." VALKENAER.

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" A conquest, and the sceptre will be thine."
Exhorting them to combat, thus they spoke,
Meanwhile the seers the fleecy victims slew,
Drew forth the reeking entrails, and observ'd
Whether the flames by unpropitious damps
Were check'd, or mounted in a spiral blaze,
The twofold signs of victory or defeat.
But if thou canst do aught by sage advice
Or magic incantation, go, dissuade
Thy Sons from this acoursed strife; the danger
Is imminent, and horror must attend
On such a conflict: with abundant tears
Wilt thou bewail their fate, if thou this day
Of both thy sons art reft.

JOCASTA.

Come forth, my Daughter,
Antigone, thy fortunes now are such
As will not suffer thee to lead the dance
Amid thy virgin train, thou, with thy mother,
Must hasten to prevent two valiant youths,
Thy Brothers, rushing upon instant death,
Else will they perish by each other's hand.

ANTIGONE, JOCASTA, CHORUS.

ANTIGONE.

Before these gates, my Mother, with what sounds
Of recent horror com'st thou to alarm
Thy friends.

JOCASTA.

Ere now, my Daughter, both thy Brothers
Have lost their lives.

ANTIGONE.

What say'st thou?

JOCASTA.

They went forth
Resolv'd on single combat.

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ANTIGONE.

Wretched me!
What more hast thou, O Mother, to relate?

JOCASTA.

Nought that can give thee joy, but follow me.

ANTIGONE.

Say whither must I go, and leave behind
My virgin comrades?

JOCASTA.

To the host.

ANTIGONE.

I blush
To mingle with the crowd.

JOCASTA.

These bashful fears
Are such as in thy present situation
Become thee not.

ANTIGONE.

How can my help avail?

JOCASTA.

Thou haply may'st appease this impious strife
Betwixt thy Brothers.

ANTIGONE.

Mother, by what means?

JOCASTA.

By falling prostrate at their knees with me.

ANTIGONE.

Lead on betwixt the van of either host,
This crisis will admit of no delay.

JOCASTA.

Haste, O my Daughter, haste, for if my Sons
I haply can prevent ere they begin
Th' accurst encounter, I shall yet behold
The blessed sun; (24) but if I find them slain

(24) The line Ην δ' υστερος, ορχαμοῦ, Κανθου, which stands in most editions as the last but one of this speech, is omitted by Grotius, Valke-

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With them will I partake one common grave.

[*Exeunt* JOCASTA *and* ANTIGONE.

CHORUS.

O D E.

I.

Ah, what boding horror throws
Chilling damps into my breast,
How is this whole frame opprest
By sympathetic pity for the woes
Of her who to those valiant youths gave birth:
But which of her lov'd Children twain
His sword with kindred gore shall stain,
(Avert it, righteous Jove, and thou, O genial Earth!)
And in the strife a Brother slay,
The stroke descending thro' his cloven shield?
To whom the sad last tribute shall I pay
A breathless corse stretcht weltering on the field?

II.

Woe to thee, thou Theban ground!
Those twin lions fir'd with rage
Couch their lances to engage,
And stand prepar'd to aim the deadly wound.
In evil hour the thought of single fight
Enter'd their souls. While many a tear
Shuddering with excess of fear
For them I vainly shed, their dirge will I recite
Tho' in a harsh Barbaric strain;
Their destin'd portion slaughter is at hand,
Ere Phœbus sinks into the western main
Their forfeit lives the Furies shall demand.

ner, Dr. Musgrave, and Brunck, on the authority, as appears from their notes, of more than one antient manuscript. In another part of this Tragedy, ver. 983. ed. Barnes, Creon closes his advice to Menœceus to escape with all speed from Thebes with these very words, which, as Valkenaer observes, there come in with great propriety, but are here foreign to the context, and have every appearance of being interpolated.

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But I my warbled lamentations cease,
For with a brow by clouds of grief o'ercast,
Creon, approaching these abodes, I view.

CREON, CHORUS.

CREON.

Ah me! shall I bewail my private woes
Or those of Thebes surrounded by such clouds
As Acheron exhales! My valiant Son
Died for his country, an illustrious name
Obtaining, but to me a source of grief.
That self-devoted victim's mangled corse
I, from yon rock, the Dragon's curst abode,
Wretch that I am, have in these hands just borne:
With lamentations my whole house resounds.
I a forlorn old man, my aged sister
Jocasta, come to fetch, that she may lave,
And on the decent bier stretch forth the corse
Of my departed Son. For it behoves
The living, by bestowing on the dead
Funereal honors, to adore the God
Who rules in hell beneath.

CHORUS.

From these abodes,
O Creon, is your Sister just gone forth,
And on her Mother's footsteps did attend
The nymph Antigone.

CREON.

Inform me, whither,
And to what scene of recent woe?

CHORUS.

She heard
Her Sons by single combat were resolv'd
Their contest for this palace to decide.

CREON.

What say'st thou? I came hither but to grace
With due sepulchral rites my breathless Son,

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Nor of these fresh disasters thought to hear.

CHORUS.

'Tis a long time, O Creon, since your Sister
Went hence; ere now I deem the fatal strife
Betwixt the sons of Oedipus is ended.

CREON.

Ah me! an evil omen I behold
In that deep gloom which overcasts the eyes
And visage of yon messenger; he comes,
No doubt, the whole transaction to relate.

MESSENGER, CREON, CHORUS.

MESSENGER.

Wretch that I am! what language can I find?

CREON.

We are undone; for with a luckless prelude
Thy speech begins.

MESSENGER.

I yet again exclaim,
Ah, wretched me! most grievous are the tidings
I bring.

CREON.

Of any farther ills than those
Which have already happen'd, would'st thou speak?

MESSENGER.

Your Sister's Sons, O Creon, are no more.

CREON.

Great are the woes, alas! which thou relat'st,
To me, and to this city.

MESSENGER.

Hast thou heard,
O house of Oedipus, how both his Sons
Partook one common fate?

CHORUS.

These very walls,
Were they endued with sense, would shed a tear.

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CREON.

Oh, what a load of misery! wretched me

MESSENGER.

Did you but know of your fresh ills—

CREON.

Could Fate
Have any ills more grievous in reserve?

MESSENGER.

With her two Sons your wretched Sister's dead.

CHORUS.

In concert wake, my friends, the plaintive strain,
And smite your heads with those uplifted hands.

CREON.

Hapless Jocasta, what a close of life
And wedlock, thro' th' ænigma of the Sphinx,
Hast thou experienc'd! but how both her Sons
Were slain in that dire contest, thro' the curses
Pronounc'd by Oedipus their injur'd Sire,
Inform me.

MESSENGER.

How Thebes triumph'd o'er th' assailants,
And her beleaguer'd turrets sav'd, you know;
Nor are the walls so distant, but from thence
Ere now those great events you must have heard.
Soon as in brazen panoply the Sons
Of aged Oedipus were clad, they stood
In the mid way twixt either host, (25) Kings both,
Of mighty hosts both Chieftains, to decide
This strife in single combat. Then his eyes
Towards Argos turning, Polynices pray'd;
" O Juno, aweful Queen, for I became
" Thy votary, since the daughter of Adrastus
" I wedded, and in his dominions found
" An habitation; grant that I may slay

(25) By reading with Dr. Musgrave in his note on this verse Τυρσεσιν, in the stead of σφαγαις, we avoid the tautology which has induced Valkenaer totally to proscribe it: King proposes ἀσπιδων.

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" My Brother, and with kindred gore distain
" In the dire conflict this victorious arm.
" For an unseemly wreath, nor to be gain'd
" Unless I take away the life of him
" Who springs from the same parents, I to thee
" My vows address ;"—tears burst forth in a stream
Equal to the calamity they wail'd,
From multitudes who on each other gaz'd.
Eteocles, then turning to the fane
Of Pallas Goddess of the golden shield,
Exclaim'd ; " O Daughter of imperial Jove,
" Grant me with vigorous arm a conquering spear
" To hurl against my Brother's breast, and smite
" The Man who comes to lay my country waste "
But when Etruria's trumpet with shrill voice
Had, like the kindled torch, a signal given,
The Combat to begin, with dreadful rage
Against each other rushing, like two boars
Whetting their ruthless tusks, they fought till foam
O'erspread their cheeks; with pointed spears they made
A furious onset; but each warrior stoop'd
Behind his brazen target, and the weapon
Was aim'd in vain ; whene'er above the rim
Of his huge buckler, either Chief beheld
The face of his antagonist, he strove
To pierce it with his spear; but thro' the holes
Bor'd in the center of their shields, they both
With caution look'd, nor could inflict a wound
By the protended javelin. A cold sweat
Thro' terror for the safety of their friends,
From every pore of those who view'd the fight,
Far more than from the combatants, arose.
But stumbling on a stone beneath his feet,
Eteocles had chanc'd to leave one leg
Unguarded by his shield ; then onward rush'd
Fierce Polynices with his lifted spear,
And marking where he at the part expos'd

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Most surely might direct the stroke, his ankle
Pierc'd with an Argive weapon, while the race
Of Danaus gave an universal shout.
But in this struggle, when the Chief who first
Was wounded, saw the shoulder of his foe
Laid bare; he into Polynices' breast,
His utmost force exerting, thrust his spear.
Again the citizens of Thebes rejoic'd;
But at the point his weapon broke: disarm'd
Backwards he sunk, and on one knee sustain'd
The weight of his whole body; from the ground
Meantime the fragment of a massive rock
Uprearing, he at Polynices threw,
And smote his shiver'd javelin. Of their spears
Now both depriv'd, on equal terms they fought
With their drawn falchions hand to hand, the din
Of war resounded from their crashing shields.
Then haply to Eteocles occurr'd
A stratagem in Thessaly devis'd,
Which thro' his frequent commerce with that land
He had adopted; from the stubborn fight,
As if disabled, seeming to retire,
His left leg he drew back, but with his shield
Guarded his flank, on his right foot sprung forward,
Plung'd in the navel of the foe his sword,
And pierc'd the spinal joint, his sides thro' pain
Now writhing, Polynices fell, with drops
Of gore the earth distaining. But his brother,
As if he in the combat had obtain'd
Decisive victory, casting on the ground
His falchion, tore the glittering spoils away,
Fixing his thoughts on those alone, and blind
To his own safety; hence was he deceiv'd:
For still with a small portion of the breath
Of life endued, fallen Polynices, grasping
His sword e'en in the agonies of death,
The liver of Eteocles transpierc'd.

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With furious teeth they rend the crimson soil,
And prostrate by each other's side have left
The conquest dubious.

CREON.

Much, alas! thy woes
Do I bewail, for by the strictest ties
With thee, O Oedipus, am I connected:
An angry God, too plainly it appears,
Thy imprecations hath fulfill'd.

MESSENGER.

What woes
Succeeded these, now hear. As both her Sons.
Expiring lay, with an impetuous step,
Attended by Antigone, rush'd forth
The wretched mother: pierc'd with deadly wounds
Beholding them; " My children," she exclaim'd
" Too late to your assistance am I come."
Embracing each by turns, she then bewail'd
The toil with which she at her breast in vain
Had nurtur'd them. She ended with a groan,
In which their sister join'd; " O ye who cherish'd
" A drooping mother's age, my nuptial rites,
" Dear Brothers, ere the hymeneal morn
" Have ye deserted." From his inmost breast
Eteocles with difficulty breath'd;
His mother's voice however reach'd his ear,
And stretching forth his clammy hand, no words
Had he to utter, but his swimming eyes
Shed tears expressive of his filial love.
But Polynices, whose lungs still perform'd
Their functions, gazing on his aged Mother
And Sister, cried; " O Mother, we are lost;
" I pity thee, my Sister too I pity,
" And my slain Brother, for altho' that friend
" Became a foe, this heart still holds him dear.
" But bury me, O thou who gav'st me birth,
" And my lov'd Sister, in my native land

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" Your mediation to appease the city
" Uniting, that of my paternal soil
" Enough for a poor grave I may obtain,
" Tho' I have lost the empire. Close these eyes
" With thy maternal hand," (her hand he plac'd
Over his eye-lids) " and farewell: the shades
" Of night already compass me around."
Their miserable souls they both breath'd forth
At the same instant. When their mother saw
This fresh calamity, no longer able
The weight of her afflictions to sustain,
She from the corses of her Sons snatch'd up
(26) A sword, and an atrocious deed perform'd;
For thro' her neck the pointed steel she drove,
And lies in death twixt those she held most dear,
E'en now embracing both. A strife of words
Broke forth in the two armies; we maintain'd
The triumph to our King belong'd; but they
To his antagonist. Amid the chiefs
A vehement contention rose; some urg'd
That Polynices' spear first gave the wound;
Others, that since both combatants were slain
The victory still was dubious. From the lines
Of battle now Antigone retir'd;
They rush'd to arms; but with auspicious forethought
The progeny of Cadmus had not thrown
Their shields aside: we in an instant made
A fierce assault, invading by surprize
The host of Argos yet unsheath'd in mail;
Not one withstood the shock, they o'er the field
In a tumultuous flight were scatter'd wide:

(26) Homer and Sophocles concur in representing Jocasta as having put an end to her life by hanging herself; but Euripides has judiciously assigned to her a fate much more suitable both to her high rank and the dignity of the Tragic Muse, and has herein been followed by Statius in his Epic poem the Thebaid, as well as by Seneca and Corneille in their Tragedies founded on the history of Oedipus, and a great variety of other dramatic writers who have treated this subject.

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Gore stream'd from many a corse of those who fell
Beneath our spears. No sooner had we gain'd
A victory in the combat, than some rear'd
The statue of imperial Jove, adorn'd
With trophies; others, stripping off the shields
Of the slain Argives, lodg'd within the walls
Our plunder: with Antigone, the rest
Bring hither the remains of the deceas'd,
That o'er them every friend may shed a tear.
For to the city hath this conflict prov'd
In part the most auspicious, but in part
The source of grievous ills.

CHORUS.

By fame alone
No longer are the miseries which this house
Have visited, made public; at the gates
Are the three corses to be seen, of those
Who, by one common death, have in the shades
Of everlasting night their portion found.

ANTIGONE, CREON, CHORUS.

ANTIGONE.

The wavy ringlets o'er my tender cheeks
I cease to spread, regardless of the blush
Which tinges with a crimson hue the face
Of virgins. Onward am I borne with speed
Like the distracted Mænades, not busied
In Bacchus' rites, but Pluto's, from my hair
Rending the golden cawl, and casting off
The saffron robe; o'er the funereal pomp
(Ah me!) presiding. Well hast thou deserv'd
Thy name, O Polynices, (wretched Thebes!)
For thine was not a vulgar strife, but murder
Retaliated by murder hath destroy'd
The house of Oedipus; the source whence stream'd
Fraternal gore was parricide. But whom

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Shall I invoke to lead the tuneful dirge,
Or in what plaints, taught by the Tragic Muse,
Solicit yonder vaulted roofs to join
With me in tears, while hither I conduct
Three kindred corses smear'd with gore, to add
Fresh triumphs to that Fury who mark'd out
For total ruin the devoted house
Of thee, O Oedipus, whose luckless skill
That intricate ænigma did unfold,
And slay the Sphinx who chanted it? My Sire!
What Grecian, what Barbarian, or what Chief
In antient days illustrious, who that sprung
From human race, hath e'er endur'd such ills
As thou hast done, such public griefs endur'd?
Seated upon the topmost spray of oak
Of branching pine, the bird, who just lost
Its mother, (27) wakes a sympathetic song
Of plaints and anguish: thus o'er the deceas'd
Lamenting, I in solitude shall waste
The remnant of my life midst gushing tears.
O'er whom shall I first cast the tresses rent
From these disfigur'd brows, upon the breasts
Of her who with maternal love sustain'd
My childhood, or my Brothers' ghastly wounds?
Ho! Oedipus, come forth from thy abode,
Blind as thou art, my aged Sire, display
Thy wretchedness; O thou who, having veil'd
With thickest darkness those extinguish'd eyes,
Beneath yon roof a tedious life prolong'st:
Hear'st thou my voice, O thou who thro' the hall
Oft mov'st at random, and as oft reliev'st
Thy wearied feet on the unwelcome couch?

(27) The reading of the Aldus, Basil, and Heidelberg editions, ωδὰς without any punctuation following, which I have adopted, has been revived by Carmelli and Reiskius.

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OEDIPUS, ANTIGONE, CREON, CHORUS.

OEDIPUS.

Why, O my Daughter, hast thou call'd me forth,
A wretch, who by this faithful staff supply
The want of sight, to the loath'd glare of day,
From a dark chamber, where I to my bed
Have been confin'd; thro' those incessant tears,
My woes extort, grown (28) grey before my time,
And wasted by affliction, till I seem
As unsubstantial as the ambient air,
A spectre rising from the realms beneath,
Or winged dream?

ANTIGONE.

Prepare thyself to hear
The inauspicious tidings I relate:
Thy Sons, thy Consort too, the faithful staff
Of thy blind footsteps and their constant guide,
No longer view the Sun. Alas, my Sire!

OEDIPUS.

Ah me! the woes I suffer call forth groans
And shrieks abundant: but inform me how
These three, O Daughter, left the realms of light.

ANTIGONE.

Not to reproach thee, or insult thy woes,
My Father, but in sadness do I speak;
Thy evil Genius, laden with the sword
With blazing torches and with impious war,
Rush'd on thy Sons.

OEDIPUS.

Ah me!

ANTIGONE.

Why groan'st thou thus?

OEDIPUS.

For my dear Sons.

(28) The comma, I apprehend, ought to be placed after πολιν, instead of after δακρυας. In Dr. Musgrave's edition, a punctuation is subjoined to each of those words; which seems needless.

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ANTIGONE.

'Twould aggravate thy griefs,
If thou with eye-sight wert again endued,
The chariot of the Sun, and these remains
Of the deceas'd, to view.

OEDIPUS.

How both my Sons
Have lost their lives, is evident: but say,
To what my Consort owes her piteous fate?

ANTIGONE.

Her tears were seen by all; her breasts she bar'd
A suppliant to her Sons, whom, near the gate
Electra, in the mead she found where springs
The lotus; like two lions for a den
With spears had they been fighting: from their wounds,
Now stiff and cold, scarce ooz'd the clotted gore,
Which Mars for a libation had bestow'd
On ruthless Pluto: snatching from the dead
A brazen sword, she plung'd it in her breast:
Slain by the luckless (29) weapon of her Sons,
Close to her Sons thus fell she. On this day
The God who wrought such horrors, O my Sire,
Hath pour'd forth his collected stores of wrath
On this devoted house.

CHORUS.

This day hath prov'd
A source of many evils to the house
Of Oedipus; may more auspicious fates
On the remainder of his life attend!

CREON.

Your lamentations cease, for it is time
To mention the interment of the dead.—

(29) The Aldus reading of Αχει, præ dolore, and that of Canterus Αγχι, propè, which is adopted by Barnes, King, and others, being both far from satisfactory; Dr. Musgrave conjectures Λογχη, telo, and is allowed by Brunck to have discovered the meaning, though not the word, which, from the manuscripts having Εχει, he infers to have been Εγχει.

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But to my words, O Oedipus, attend;
Eteocles thy Son hath to these hands
Consign'd the sceptre of the Theban realm,
On Hæmon, at his nuptials with thy Daughter
Antigone, to be bestow'd in dower:
I for this cause no longer can allow thee
Here to reside: for in the clearest terms
Tiresias hath pronounc'd, that while thou dwell'st
In these domains, Thebes never can be blest.
Therefore depart. — Nor thro' a wanton pride,
Nor any hate I bear thee, do I hold
Such language, but because I justly dread
Thy evil Genius will destroy this land.

OEDIPUS.

How wretched from the moment of my birth
Me hast thou made, O Fate, if ever man
Knew misery: ere I from my mother's womb
Was to the light brought forth, Apollo warn'd
The royal Laius with prophetic voice,
That I, his future child, who 'gainst the will
Of Heaven had been begotten, should become
The murderer of my Father. Wretched me!
But soon as I was born, he who begot
Sought to destroy me, for in me a foe
He deem'd would view the sun: but 'twas ordain'd
That I should slay him. While I yet was loth
To quit the breast, he sent me for a prey
To savage beasts; I scap'd: but would to Heaven
Cithæron had, for saving me, been plung'd
Into the fathomless and yawning gulph
Of Tartarus! Fortune gave me for a servant
To Polybus. But having slain my Sire,
Wretch that I am, my hapless Mother's bed
Ascending, thence did I at once beget
Both Sons and Brothers: them have I destroy'd
By showering down on my devoted race

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The curses I inherited from (30) Laius.
Yet was not I by nature made so void
Of understanding, as to form a plot
'Gainst my own eye-sight, or my children's lives,
Unless some God had interfer'd. — No more. —
What shall I do? ah me! what faithful guide,
My feet thro' blindness tottering, will attend?
Jocasta the deceas'd? while yet she liv'd,
I know she would. — Or my two noble Sons?
They are no more. — Have not I youth still left
Sufficient to find means to gain me food?
But where shall I procure it? or why thus,
O Creon, do you utterly destroy me?
For you will take away my poor remains
Of life, if you expell me from this land.
Yet will not I, by twining round your knees
These arms, put on the semblance of a dastard;
For the renown I gain'd in days of yore,
Tho' miserable, I never will belie.

CREON.

Thou with a manly spirit hast refus'd
To clasp my knees; but in the Theban realm
No longer can I suffer thee to dwell,
Of the deceas'd, the one into the palace
Must be convey'd: but as for him who came
With (31) foreign troops to lay his country waste,

(30) Meaning the imprecations against Laius the father of Oedipus, uttered by Pelops, from whom Laius had treacherously stolen his son Chrysippus. See the first note to this Tragedy.

(31) King, in his notes, objects to the expression αλλως, and proposes to substitute σπλως in its stead, but without altering either the text or version. In my copy of his edition, I meet with the following manuscript note of the late Mr. De Missy, " Αλλως, vocat ni fallor Argivos, a " Thebanis nimirum diversos, extraneos, αλλοφυλους, αλλως η Θηβαιους." The reader will meet with a defence of αλλως in p. 546, of Valkenaer's edition of this Tragedy, which appears to me too full and satisfactory to leave any doubt of the vulgar, being the authentic, reading, especially as Dr. Musgrave, who has in his notes given the preference to King's conjec-

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The corse of Polynices, cast it forth
Unburied from the confines of this land.
This edict, by a herald, to all Thebes
Will I announce; whoe'er shall be detected
Adorning with a garland his remains,
Or o'er them scattering earth, shall be with death
Requited: for unwept and uninterr'd
He for a prey to vultures must be left.
No longer, O Antigone, lament
O'er these three breathless corses, but with speed
To your apartment go, and there remain
Amidst your virgin comrades till to-morrow,
When Hæmon's bed awaits you.

ANTIGONE.

O my Sire,
Into what hopeless misery art thou plung'd!
For thee far more than for the dead I moan;
Thou hast not aught to make thy weight of woe
Less grievous; the afflictions thou endur'st
Are universal. But, O thou new King,
Of thee I ask, why dost thou treat my Father
With scorn, why banish him from Thebes, why frame
Harsh laws against a wretched corse?

CREON.

Such counsels
Were by Eteocles, not me, devis'd.

ANTIGONE.

Devoid of sense are they; thou too art frantic,
Who these decrees obey'st.

CREON.

Is it not just
To execute th' injunctions we receive?

ANTIGONE.

No, not if they are base and ill-advis'd.

ture, and inserted " armis instead of " aliis" in his Latin version, has not, in support of such innovation, cited the authority of a single manuscript: nor has Brunck, who admits σπλοις into his text.

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CREON.

What mean you? can it be unjust to cast
His body to the dogs?

ANTIGONE.

A lawless vengeance
Is this which ye exact.

CREON.

Because he wag'd
An impious war against his native city.

ANTIGONE.

Hath not he yielded up his life to fate?

CREON.

He shall be punish'd also in the loss
Of sepulture.

ANTIGONE.

Wherein, if he requir'd
His portion of the realm, did he transgress?

CREON.

Know then he shall remain without a grave.

ANTIGONE.

I will inter him, tho' the state forbid.

CREON.

You shall be buried with him.

ANTIGONE.

For two friends
'Twere glorious in their death to be united.

CREON.

Seize and convey her home.

ANTIGONE.

I will not loose
My hold, nor shall ye tear me from his body.

CREON.

O virgin, the decrees of fate are such
As thwart your wayward views.

ANTIGONE.

It is decreed,
No insults shall be offer'd to the dead.

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CREON.

Over this corse let none presume to strew
The moisten'd dust.

ANTIGONE.

Thee, Creon, I implore
By my lov'd Mother, by Jocasta's shade.

CREON.

In vain are your entreaties: such request
I cannot grant.

ANTIGONE.

But suffer me to lave
The body —

CREON.

I this interdict must add
To those which thro' the city are proclaim'd.

ANTIGONE.

And close with bandages his gaping wounds.

CREON.

To his remains no honours shall you pay.

ANTIGONE.

Yet, O my dearest Brother, on thy lips
This kiss will I imprint.

CREON.

Nor by these plaints
Make your espousals wretched.

ANTIGONE.

Dar'st thou think
That I will ever live to wed thy Son?

CREON.

You by necessity's superior force
Will be constrain'd. For how can you escape
The nuptial bond?

ANTIGONE.

I on that night will act
Like one of Danaus' Daughters.

CREON.

Mark'd ye not

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How boldly, with what arrogance she spoke?

ANTIGONE.

Bear witness, O my dagger, to the oath.

CREON.

Why from this wedlock wish you to be freed?

ANTIGONE.

My miserable Father in his flight
I will attend.

CREON.

A generous soul is yours,
Abundant folly too.

ANTIGONE.

I am resolv'd
To share his death; of that too be assur'd.

CREON.

Go, leave this realm; you shall not slay my Son.

[*Exit* CREON.

OEDIPUS.

The (32) for thy zeal, my Daughter, I applaud.

ANTIGONE.

How can I wed, while you my Father roam
A solitary exile?

OEDIPUS.

To enjoy

(32) On this scene, as it stands in the version of Gascoigne and Kinwelmersh, I have met with the following remark in the Rev. Mr. Warton's History of English Poetry, which I here take the liberty of citing, as applicable not only to the dialogue before us, but also to a considerable portion of the writings of Euripides; "The whole dialogue in the "original is carried on in single lines. Such, however, is the pregnant "simplicity of the Greek language, that it would have been *impossible* "to have rendered line for line in English." Vol. III. p. 377. By *impossible*, I understand, not to be effected without either mutilating the sense, or making the English version so harsh and obscure, as to be scarcely intelligible without referring to the original. Neither Sibilet, who published a French translation of the Iphigenia in Aulis, about the middle of the sixteenth century, nor Carmelli, by whom the works of Euripides were about thirty years ago rendered into Italian poetry, have laid themselves under any such restriction of giving line for line.

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Thy better fortunes, stay thou here: my woes
I will endure with patience.

ANTIGONE.

Who, my Sire,
Shall minister to you depriv'd of sight?

OEDIPUS.

I, in whatever field the Fates ordain
That I shall fall, must lie.

ANTIGONE.

Where's Oedipus,
And that fam'd riddle?

OEDIPUS.

Lost, for ever lost:
My prosperous fortunes from one single day,
And from one day my ruin I derive.

ANTIGONE.

May not I also be allow'd to take
A part in your afflictions?

OEDIPUS.

'Twere unseemly
For thee, my Daughter, from this land to roam
With thy blind Father.

ANTIGONE.

To a virtuous maid
Not base, my Sire, but noble.

OEDIPUS.

Lead me on,
That I may touch thy Mother.

ANTIGONE.

Here she lies:
Clasp that dear object in your aged arms.

OEDIPUS.

O Mother, O my miserable Wife!

ANTIGONE.

A piteous spectacle, o'erwhelm'd at once
By every ill.

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OEDIPUS.

But where's Eteocles'
And Polynices' corse?

ANTIGONE.

Stretcht on the ground
Close to each other.

OEDIPUS.

A blind Father's hand
Place on the visage of each hapless youth.

ANTIGONE.

Lo here they are: stretch forth your hand, and touch
Your breathless Sons.

OEDIPUS.

Remains of those I lov'd,
The wretched offspring of a wretched Sire.

ANTIGONE.

Thy name, O Polynices, shall thy Sister
For ever hold most dear.

OEDIPUS.

Now, O my Daughter,
The oracle of Phœbus is fulfill'd.

ANTIGONE.

What oracle? speak you of any woes
We have not yet experienc'd?

OEDIPUS.

That in Athens
An exile I shall die.

ANTIGONE.

Where? in the realm
Of Attica, what turret shall receive you?

OEDIPUS.

(33) Coloneus' fane, where Neptune's altars rise.

(33) The word Κολωνὸς, or Κολωνη, is made use of by Homer and other writers to signify a hill. Henry Stephens, in his Greek Thesaurus, adds, that there was a famous place in the Athenian territories known by that name, which was sacred to Neptune, and called ἱππιος, on account of that

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But haste, and minister with duteous zeal
To thy blind Father, since to share my flight
Was thy most earnest wish.

ANTIGONE.

My aged Sire,
Into a wretched banishment go forth:
O give me that dear hand, for I will guide
Your tottering steps, as prosperous gales assist
The voyage of the bark.

OEDIPUS.

Lo, I advance:
Do thou conduct me, O my hapless Daughter.

ANTIGONE.

I am indeed of all the Theban maids
The most unhappy.

OEDIPUS.

My decrepid feet
Where shall I place? O Daughter, with a staff
Furnish this hand.

ANTIGONE.

Come hither, O my Sire.
Here rest your feet: for, like an empty dream,
Your strength is but mere semblance.

God being considered as the inventor of horsemanship. Thucydides mentions Pisander's holding a council at Colonæus, and speaks of its distance from Athens as ten stadia, or about a mile and quarter. Sophocles says, Oedipus died and was buried there; that in his last moments he solemnly forbad any one to approach his grave. But it appears from Homer, that the body of that unfortunate King was, after his death, deposited at Thebes with funereal honours, it being said of Mecisteus, father to Euryalus, one of the combatants at the games with which Achilles celebrated the memory of Patroclus, *that he went to Thebes, and was victorious at the tomb of Oedipus.* The account given by Pausanias (who objects to that of Sophocles as not according with Homer) that the tomb of Oedipus was within the boundary of the Athenian Areopagus, and that, upon making a diligent enquiry, he discovered that his bones were removed thither from Thebes, is equally irreconcileable to both those writers; to Sophocles, in representing Oedipus as dying at Thebes; and to Homer, in asserting that he was removed into the province of Attica for interment.

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OEDIPUS.

Grievous exile.
A weak old man, he from his native land
Drives forth. My sufferings are alas! most dreadful.

ANTIGONE.

What is there in the sufferings you complain of
Peculiarly distressful? doth (34) not Justice
Behold the sinner, and with penal strictness
Each foolish action of mankind repay?

OEDIPUS.

Still am I he whom the victorious Muse
Exalted to the skies, when I explain'd
The dark ænigma by that Fiend propos'd.

ANTIGONE.

Why speak of the renown which you obtain'd
When you o'ercame the Sphynx? cease to recount
Past happiness. For, O my Sire, this curse
Awaited you, an exile from your country
To die we know not where. My virgin comrades
Leaving to wail my absence, I depart,
Far from my native land ordain'd to roam
Unlike a bashful maid.

OEDIPUS.

How is thy soul
With matchless generosity endued!

ANTIGONE.

Such conduct 'midst my Father's woes shall make
My name illustrious. Yet am I unhappy
Thro' the foul scorn with which they treat my Brother,
Whose weltering corse without these gates is thrown
Unburied. His remains, ill-fated youth,
Tho' death should be the punishment, with earth
I privately will cover, O my Sire.

(34) In making the whole of this speech interrogative, I have followed the direction given by King in his notes, and the example of Carmelli's version, and Brunck's note, though not his text.

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OEDIPUS.

Go join thy comrades.

ANTIGONE.

With loud plaints, enough
Have I assail'd the ear of every friend.

OEDIPUS.

But at the altars thou must offer up
Thy supplications.

ANTIGONE.

They, with my distress,
Are satiated.

OEDIPUS.

To Bacchus' temple then
Repair, on that steep mountain where no step
Profane invades his orgies, chosen haunt
Of his own Mænades.

ANTIGONE.

Erst in the hides
Of Theban stags array'd, I on these hills
Join'd in the dance of Semele, bestowing
A homage they approv'd not on the Gods.

OEDIPUS.

Illustrious citizens of Thebes behold
That Oedipus, who the ænigma solv'd,
The first of men, when I had singly quell'd
The Sphynx's ruthless power, but now o'erwhelm'd
With infamy, I from this land am driven
A miserable exile. But why groan,
Why utter fruitless plaints? For man is bound
To bear the doom which righteous Heaven awards.

CHORUS.

O venerable Victory, take possession
Of my whole life, nor ever cease to twine
Around these brows thy laureat wreath divine.

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MEDEA.

Ferox, invictaque. Hor.

Delibutis ulta donis pellicem,
Serpente fugit alita. Ibid.

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PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

NURSE OF MEDEA.

ATTENDANT ON THE CHILDREN.

MEDEA.

CHORUS OF CORINTHIAN WOMEN.

CREON.

JASON.

ÆGEUS.

MESSENGER.

THE TWO SONS OF JASON AND MEDEA.

SCENE—BEFORE THE PALACE OF CREON AT CORINTH.

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MEDEA.

NURSE.

Ah! would to Heaven the Argo ne'er had urg'd
Its rapid voyage to the Colchian strand
'Twixt the Cyanean rocks, nor had the pine
Been fell in Pelion's forests, nor the hands
Of those illustrious Chiefs, who that fam'd bark
Ascended, to obtain the golden fleece
For royal Pelias, plied the stubborn oar;
So to Iolchos' turrets had my Queen
Medea never sail'd, her soul with love
For Jason smitten, nor, as since her arts
Prevail'd on Pelias Daughters to destroy
Their Father, in this realm of Corinth dwelt
An exile with her Husband and her Sons;
Thus to the citizens whose land receiv'd her,
Had she grown pleasing, and in all his schemes
Assisted Jason: to the wedded pair;
Hence bliss supreme arises, when the bond
Of concord joins them: now their souls are fill'd
With ruthless hate, and all affection's lost:
For false to his own Sons, and her I serve,
With a new consort of imperial birth
Sleeps the perfidious Jason, to the Daughter
Of Creon wedded, lord of these domains.
The wretched scorn'd Medea, oft exclaims,
"O by those oaths, by that right hand thou gav'st
"The pledge of faith!" She then invokes the Gods
To witness what requital she hath found
From Jason. On a couch she lies, no food
Receiving, her whole frame subdu'd by grief,
And since she mark'd the treachery of her lord

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Melts into tears incessant, from the ground
Her eyes she never raises, never turns
Her face aside, but stedfast as a rock,
Or as the ocean's rising billows, hears
The counsels of her friends, save when she weeps
In silent anguish, with her snowy neck
Averted, for her Sire, her native land,
And home, which she forsaking hither came
With him who scorns her now: she from her woes
Too late hath learnt how enviable the lot
Of those who leave not their paternal roof.
She even hates her Children, nor with joy
Beholds them: much I dread lest she contrive
Some enterprise unheard of, for her soul
Is vehement, nor will she tamely brook
Injurious treatment; well, full well I know
Her temper, which alarms me, lest she steal
Into their chamber, where the genial couch
Is spread, and with the sword their vitals pierce,
Or to the slaughter of the Bridegroom add
That of the Monarch, and in some mischance,
Yet more severe than death, herself involve:
For dreadful is her wrath, nor will the object
Of her aversion gain an easy triumph.
But lo, returning from the race, her Sons
Draw near: they think not of their mother's woes,
For youthful souls are strangers to affliction.

ATTENDANT, WITH THE SONS OF JASON AND MEDEA, NURSE.

ATTENDANT.

O thou, who for a length of time hast dwelt
Beneath the roofs of that illustrious Dame
I serve, why stand'st thou at these gates alone
Repeating to thyself a doleful tale:
Or wherefore by Medea from her presence
Art thou dismiss'd?

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NURSE.

Old man, O you who tend
On Jason's Sons, to faithful servants aught
Of evil fortune that befalls their lords
Is a calamity: but such a pitch
Of grief am I arriv'd at, that I felt
An impulse which constrain'd me to come forth
From these abodes, and to the conscious Earth
And Heaven proclaim the lost Medea's fate.

ATTENDANT.

Cease not the plaints of that unhappy Dame?

NURSE.

Your ignorance I envy: for her woes
Are but beginning, nor have yet attain'd
Their mid career.

ATTENDANT.

O how devoid of reason,
If we with terms thus harsh may brand our lords,
Of ills more recent nothing yet she knows.

NURSE.

Old Man, what mean you? scruple not to speak.

ATTENDANT.

Nought. What I have already said repents me.

NURSE.

I by that beard conjure you not to hide
The secret from your faithful fellow-servant.
For I the strictest silence will observe
If it be needful.

ATTENDANT.

Some one I o'erheard,
(Appearing not to listen, as I came
Where aged men sit near Pirene's fount
(1) And hurl their dice,) say that from Corinth's land

(1) In a note on the 196th verse of the Iphigenia in Aulis, I have stated my reasons for rendering Πεσσοῖς, Dice rather than "Chess," as apprehending the latter to be of more modern date, and expressed by the Greek

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Creon the lord of these domains will banish
The Children with their Mother; but I know not
Whether th' intelligence be true, and wish
It may prove otherwise.

NURSE.

Will Jason brook
Such an injurious treatment of his Sons,
Altho' he be at variance with their Mother?

ATTENDANT.

By new connections, are all former ties
Dissolv'd, and he no longer is a friend
To this neglected race.

NURSE.

We shall be plung'd
In utter ruin, if to our old woes
Yet unexhausted, any fresh we add.

ATTENDANT.

Be silent, and suppress the dismal tale,
For 'tis unfit our royal Mistress know.

NURSE.

Hear, O ye Children, how your Father's soul
Is turn'd against you: still, that he may perish,
I do not pray, because he is my Lord;
Yet treacherous to his friends hath he been found.

word ζαλκιον, known only to the barbarous ages. The following singular passage from an epistle of Peter Damianus, an ecclesiastical writer of the eleventh century, to Hildebrand, (Pope Gregory 7th) which has since occurred to me, looks as if the game of Chess was in his days a thing *quite new and strange*, instead of being transmitted to modern Europe from either the contemporaries of Jason or those of Palamedes: the following is a literal translation. "Was it right, I say, and consistent with thy duty, "to sport away thy evenings amidst the vanity of Chess, and defile the "hand which offers up the body of our Lord, the tongue that mediates "between God and man, with the pollution of a *sacrilegious* game?" Mere zeal could not have dictated such language from a Man of high rank, and an author of eminence, unless accompanied with some portion of ignorance in regard to an amusement which is at least of an harmless nature; but was then, it seems, but just introduced at Rome.

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ATTENDANT.

Who is not treacherous? hast thou liv'd so long
Without discerning how self-love prevails (2)
O'er social? some by (3) glory, some by gain,
Are prompted. Then what wonder, for the sake
Of a new Consort, if the Father slight
These Children?

NURSE.

Go, all will be well, go in.
Keep them as far as possible away,
Nor suffer them to come into the presence
Of their afflicted mother; for her eyes
Have I just seen with wild distraction fir'd,
As if some horrid purpose against them
She meant to execute; her wrath I know
Will not be pacified, till on some victim
It like a thunderbolt from Heaven descends;
May she assail her foes alone, nor aim
The stroke at those she ought to hold most dear.

MEDEA (*within.*)

Ah me! how grievous are my woes! what means
Can I devise to end this hated life?

NURSE.

'Tis as I said: strong agitations sieze
Your mother's heart, her choler's rais'd. Dear Children,
Beneath these roofs hie instantly, nor come
Into her sight, accost her not, beware
Of these ferocious manners and the rage

(2) "Verum illud proverbium est, vulgo quod dici solet:
"Omnes sibi malle melius esse quam alteri."
Terent. Andrea, A. 2. Sc. 5.
and see Victorii Var. Lect. L. 14. c. 6.

(3) Unable to interpret the word ἰσωσις here in such a manner as to give any satisfactory meaning, I have adopted in its stead ἐς τὸ κρατος, the alteration of Janus Guilielmus, mentioned with approbation by Barnes. In Dr. Musgrave's supplementary notes, the reader will find a different conjectural reading, which is by far more strained, and extends itself through almost the whole line.

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Which boils in that ungovernable spirit.
Go with the utmost speed, for I perceive
Too clearly that her plaints, which in thick clouds
Arise at first, will kindle ere 'tis long
With tenfold violence. What deeds of horror
From that high-soaring, that remorseless soul,
May we expect, when goaded by despair!

[*Exeunt* ATTENDANT *and* SONS.

MEDEA *(within.)*

I have endur'd, alas! I have endur'd,
Wretch that I am! such agonies as call
For loudest plaints. Ye execrable Sons
Of a devoted Mother, perish ye
With your false Sire, and perish his whole house.

NURSE.

Why should the Sons, ah wretched me, partake
Their Father's guilt? why hat'st thou them? ah me!
How greatly, O ye Children, do I fear
Lest mischief should befall you: for the souls
Of Kings (4) are prone to cruelty, so seldom
Subdued, and over others wont to rule,
That it is difficult for such to change
Their angry purpose. Happier I esteem
The lot of those who still are wont to live
Among their equals. May I thus grow old,
If not in splendor, yet with safety blest!
For first of all, renown attends the name
Of Mediocrity, and to mankind

(4) This sentiment corresponds with that which Homer puts into the mouth of Calchas:

" Κρισσων γαρ βασιλευς οτι χωσεται ανδρι χερηι
" Ειπερ γαρ χολον, γε και αυτημαρ κατασκιφη
" Αλλα γε και μετοπισθεν εχει κοτον οφρα τελεσση,
" Εν σηθεσσιν σωσι." Il. L. i. v. 80.

" For tho' we deem the short-liv'd fury past,
" 'Tis sure the mighty will revenge at last." POPE.

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Such station is more useful: but not long
Can the extremes of grandeur ever last;
And heavier are the curses which it brings
When Fortune visits us in all her wrath.

CHORUS, NURSE.

CHORUS.

The voice of Colchos' hapless Dame I heard,
A clamorous voice, nor yet is she appeas'd.
Speak, O thou aged matron, for her cries
I from the innermost apartment heard;
Nor can I triumph in the woes with which
This house is visited; for to (5) my soul,
Dear are its interests.

NURSE.

This whole house is plung'd
In ruin, and its interests are no more.
While Corinth's palace to our Lord affords
A residence, within her chamber pines
My mistress, and the counsels of her friends
Afford no comfort to her tortur'd soul.

MEDEA *(within.)*

O that a flaming thunderbolt from Heaven
Would pierce this brain! for what can longer life
To me avail? fain would I seek repose
In death, and cast away this hated being.

CHORUS.

Heard'st thou, all-righteous Jove, thou fostering Earth,
And thou, O radiant Lamp of day, what plaints,
What clamorous plaints this miserable Wife
Hath utter'd? Thro' insatiable desire,
Ah why would you precipitate your death?

(5) In reading μοι preferably to μοι, I find myself authorised by Lascaris's edition, and the Scholia, and some of the most antient manuscripts mentioned in Dr. Musgrave's note: Aldus and the late editors, a variety of whom I have turned to, read μοι, which greatly alters, but does not seem by any means to improve, the sense.

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O most unwise! these imprecations spare.
What if your Lord's affections are engag'd
By a new Bride, reproach him not, for Jove
Will be the dread avenger of your wrongs;
Nor melt away with unavailing grief,
Weeping for the lost partner of your bed.

MEDEA *(within.)*

Great Themis and Diana, aweful Queen,
Do ye behold the insults I endure,
Tho' by each oath most holy I have bound
That execrable Husband: May I see
Him and his Bride, torn limb from limb, bestrew
The palace; me have they presum'd to wrong,
Altho' I ne'er provok'd them. O my Sire,
And thou my native land, whence I with shame
Departed when my (6) Brother I had slain.

NURSE.

Heard ye not all she said, with a loud voice
Invoking Themis, who fulfills the vow,
And Jove, to whom the tribes of men look up,
As guardian of their oaths. Medea's rage
Can by no trivial vengeance be appeas'd.

CHORUS.

Could we but draw her hither, and prevail
On her to hear the counsels we suggest,
Then haply might she check that bitter wrath,
That vehemence of temper; for my zeal
Shall not be spar'd to aid my friends. But go,
And say, "O hasten, ere to those within
" Thou do some mischief, for these sorrows rush
" With an impetuous tempest on thy soul."

NURSE.

This will I do; tho' there is cause to fear
That on my Mistress I shall ne'er prevail:
Yet I my labor gladly will bestow.

(6) Absyrtes.

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Tho' such a look she on her servants casts,
As the ferocious lioness who guards
Her tender young, when any one draws near
To speak to her. Thou would'st not judge amiss,
In charging folly and a total want
Of wisdom on the men of antient days;
Who for their festivals invented hymns,
And to the banquet, and the genial board,
Confin'd those accents which o'er human life
Diffuse extatic pleasures: but no artist
Hath yet discover'd, by the tuneful song,
And varied modulations of the lyre,
How we those piercing sorrows may assuage,
Whence slaughters and such horrid mischiefs spring
As many a prosperous mansion have o'erthrown.
Could music interpose her healing aid
In these inveterate maladies, such gift
Had been the first of blessings to mankind:
But 'midst choice viands and the circling bowl,
Why should those minstrels strain their useless throat?
To cheer the drooping heart, convivial joys
Are in themselves sufficient. [*Exit* NURSE.

CHORUS.

Mingled groans
And lamentations burst upon mine ear;
She in the bitterness of soul exclaims
Against her impious husband, who betray'd
His plighted faith; by grievous wrongs oppress,
She the vindictive Gods invokes, and Themis,
Jove's Daughter, guardian of the sacred oath,
Who o'er the waves to Greece benignly steer'd
Their bark adventurous, launch'd in midnight gloom,
Thro' ocean's gates which never can be clos'd!

MEDEA, CHORUS.

MEDEA.

From my apartment, ye Corinthian Dames,

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Lest ye my conduct censure, I come forth:
For I have known full many who obtain'd
Fame and high rank; some (7) to the public gaze
Stood ever forth, while others, in a sphere
More distant, chose their merits to display:
Nor yet a few, who, studious of repose,
Have with malignant obloquy been call'd
Devoid of spirit: for no human eyes
Can form a just discernment; at one glance,
Before the inmost secrets of the heart
Are clearly known, a bitter hate 'gainst him
Who never wrong'd us, they too oft inspire.
But 'tis a stranger's duty to adopt
The manners of the land in which he dwells;
Nor can I praise that native, led astray
By mere perverseness and o'erweening folly,
Who bitter enmity incurs from those
Of his own city. But, alas! my friends,
This unforeseen calamity hath wither'd,
The vigor of my soul. I am undone,
Bereft of every joy that life can yield,
And therefore wish to die. For as to him,
My Husband, whom it did import me most
To have a thorough knowledge of, he proves
The worst of men. But sure among all those
Who have with breath and reason been endued,
We women are the most unhappy race.
First with abundant gold are we constrain'd
To (8) buy a husband, and in him receive

(7) The ill success of the repeated attempts I have made to translate this passage conformably to the usual reading, in a manner satisfactory to myself, has induced me to adopt Brunck's alteration of σε for σφε, and to understand by ἀμαστοι τε those who attended the forum: and by ὁ δημιος, those employed in the fleet and army, or on foreign embassies.

(8) The attack of the Scholiast on this part of Medea's speech, as inconsistent with the manners of the heroic ages, when Dower, he says, used to be given to the Bride's kindred, and not received from them, has been so fully obviated by Salmasius in his treatise de Modo usurarum,

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A haughty master. Still doth there remain
One mischief than this mischief yet more grievous,
The hazard whether we procure a mate
Worthless or virtuous: for divorces bring
Reproach to woman, nor must she renounce
The man the wedded; as for her who comes
Where usages and edicts, which at home
She learnt not, are established, she the gift
Of divination needs to teach her how
A Husband must be chosen: if aright
These duties we perform, and he the yoke
Of wedlock with complacency sustains,
Ours is a happy life; but if we fail

where it is shewn by abundant instances, that, in the earliest days of Greece, a considerable present sometimes accompanied the Bride by way of portion, and sometimes was given to the Father in order to obtain her, δῶς & φερνὴ, as well as the word Dower in English, being made use of in either of these two senses, that it may seem needless to say any thing farther on the subject. But as the objection is renewed from a quarter I could least have expected, by Monsieur Rochfort, who favoured the public about ten years ago with a translation of Homer into the French language, who in the Acad. des Inscriptions, Tom. 36, p. 437, says, "c'est a tort que Medee se plaint dans "Euripide du malheur des fem-"mes obligés d'acheter un mari au poids de l'or: cette plainte convenoit "au siecle d'Euripide, & non a des siecles plus rapproches de la nature." It may not be amiss to repeat one or two instances adduced from Homer by Salmasius, to shew, that, during the siege of Troy, a period of time which does not appear to have been more than seventy years subsequent to the Argonautic expedition, it was no unusual thing for the Husband to acquire a fortune by his wife; nor would Othryoneus have been represented as suing for Priam's daughter Cassandra to be given to him in marriage, ωνάομαι, which unquestionably means without his receiving any Dower with her, had such portions been in those days unheard of: but the following passage,

ὁ δ' αὐτ' ἐπιμαλια δωτὺ
Πολλὰ μαλ' ὅσσ' ἄνω τις ἡ πεδιώνε δυγατρὶ.
Himself will give the Dower, so vast a store
As never father gave a child before. POPE.

which is yet more decisive, occurs in the 9th book of the Iliad, where in order to induce Achilles to rejoin the confederate host of Greece, Ulysses carries proposals from Agamemnon, offering to him either of his Daughters in marriage.

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In this great object, better 'twere to die.
For, when afflicted by domestic ills,
A man goes forth, his choler to appease,
And to some friend or comrade can reveal
What he endures; but we to him alone
For succour must look up. They still contend
That we, at home remaining, lead a life
Exempt from danger, while they launch the spear:
False are these judgements; rather would I thrice,
Arm'd with a target, in th' embattled field
Maintain my stand, than suffer once the throes
Of childbirth: but this language suits not you:
This is your native city, the abode
Of your lov'd parents, every comfort life
Can furnish is at hand, and with your friends
You here converse: but I, forlorn, and left
Without a home, am by that Husband scorn'd
Who carried me from a Barbarian realm.
Nor Mother, Brother, or relation now
Have I, to whom I 'midst these storms of woe,
Like an auspicious haven, can repair.
Thus far I therefore crave ye will espouse
My interests, as if haply any means
Or any stratagem can be devis'd
For me with justice to avenge these wrongs
On my perfidious Husband, on the King
Who to that Husband's arms his Daughter gave,
And the new-wedded Princess; to observe
Strict silence. For altho' at other times
A woman, fill'd with terror, is unfit
For battle, or to face the lifted sword,
She when her soul by marriage wrongs is fir'd,
Thirsts with a rage unparallel'd for blood.

CHORUS.

The silence you request, I will observe,
For justly on your Lord may you inflict
Severest vengeance: still I wonder not

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If your disastrous fortunes you bewail:
But Creon I behold who wields the sceptre
Of these domains; the monarch hither comes
His fresh resolves in person to declare.

CREON, MEDEA, CHORUS.

CREON.

Thee, O Medea, who, beneath those looks
Stern and forbidding, harbour'st 'gainst thy Lord
Resentment, I command to leave these realms
An exile; for companions of thy flight
Take both thy children with thee, nor delay;
Myself pronounce this edict; I my home
Will not revisit, from the utmost bounds
Of this domain till I have cast thee forth.

MEDEA.

Ah, wretched me! I utterly am ruin'd:
For in the swift pursuit, my ruthless foes,
Each cable loosing have unfurl'd their sails,
Nor can I land on any friendly shore
To save myself, yet am resolv'd to speak,
Tho' punishment impend: what cause, O Creon,
Have you for banishing me?

CREON.

Thee I dread,
(No longer is it needful to disguise
My thoughts) lest 'gainst my Daughter thou contrive
Some evil such as medicine cannot reach.
Full many incidents conspire to raise
This apprehension; with a deep-laid craft
Art thou endued, expert in the device
Of mischiefs numberless, thou also griev'st
Since thou art sever'd from thy husband's bed.
I am inform'd too thou hast menac'd vengeance
'Gainst me, because my Daughter I bestow'd
In marriage, and the Bridegroom, and his Bride:

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Against these threats I therefore ought to guard
Before they take effect; and better far
Is it for me, O woman, to incur
Thy hatred now, than sooth'd by thy mild words
Hereafter my forbearance to bewail.

MEDEA.

Not now, alas! for the first time, but oft
To me, O Creon, hath opinion prov'd
Most baleful, and the source of grievous woes.
Nor ever ought the man, who is possest
Of a sound judgement, to train up his children
To be too wise: for they who live exempt
From (9) war and all its toils, the odious name
Among their fellow-citizens acquire
Of abject sluggards. If to the unwise
You some fresh doctrine broach, you are esteem'd
Not sapient, but a trifler: when to those
Who in their own conceit possess each branch
Of knowledge, you in state affairs obtain
Superior fame, to them you grow obnoxious.
I also feel the grievance I lament;
Some envy my attainments, (10) others think
My temper uncomplying, tho' my wisdom
Is not transcendent. But from me it seems
You apprehend some violence; dismiss

(9) The reading of ωλους, instead of αλλους, which I have adopted from Brunck, is, as he assures us in his note, supported by the authority of manuscripts, though it has escaped all preceding editors: that of τιν, instead of σοφα, two lines lower, occurs in the edition of Lascaris, and one of the Persian manuscripts cited by Dr. Musgrave, and is followed in his Latin version, though not inserted in his Greek text.

(10) The line Τους δ' ηυχαια, τους δε δαιφρω τροπω, is proscribed by Pierson with his usual warmth, and but faintly defended by Reiskius. Musgrave and Brunck have both omitted it in their editions, it being only written in the margin of the first of the manuscripts in the King of France's library, consulted by Musgrave. I have accordingly declined translating it here, as it is repeated with small variations, v. 808. edit. Barnes, though it stands as part of the text in Lascaris's edition, as well as that of Aldus.

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Those fears; my situation now is such,
O Creon, that to monarchs I can give
No umbrage: and in what respect have you
Treated me with injustice? you bestow'd
Your Daughter where your inclination led.
Tho' I abhor my Husband, I suppose
That you have acted wisely, nor repine
At your prosperity; conclude the match,
Be happy: but allow me in this land
Yet to reside: for I my wrongs will bear
In silence, and to my superiors yield.

CREON.

Soft is the sound of thy persuasive words,
But in my soul I feel the strongest dread
Lest thou devise some mischief, and now less
Than ever can I trust thee; for 'gainst those
Of hasty tempers with more ease we guard,
Or men or women, than the silent foe
Who acts with prudence. Therefore be thou gone
With speed, no answer make: it is decreed,
Nor hast thou art sufficient to avert
Thy doom of banishment; for well aware
Am I thou hat'st me.

MEDEA.

Spare me, by those knees
And your new-wedded Daughter I implore.

CREON.

Lavish of words, thou never shalt persuade me.

MEDEA.

Will you then drive me hence, and to my prayers
No reverence yield?

CREON.

I do not love thee more
Than those of my own house.

MEDEA.

With what regret
Do I remember thee, my native land!

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CREON.

Except my children, I hold nought so dear.

MEDEA.

To mortals what a dreadful scourge is Love!

CREON.

As Fortune dictates, Love becomes, I ween,
Either a curse or blessing.

MEDEA.

Righteous Jove,
Let not the author of my woes escape thee.

CREON.

Away, vain woman, free me from my cares.

MEDEA.

No lack of cares have I.

CREON.

Thou from this spot
Shalt by my servants' hands ere long be torn.

MEDEA.

Not thus, O Creon, I your mercy crave.

CREON.

To trouble me, it seems, thou art résolv'd.

MEDEA.

I will depart, nor urge this fond request.

CREON.

Why dost thou struggle then, nor from our realm
Withdraw thyself?

MEDEA.

Allow me this one day
Here to remain, till my maturer thoughts
Instruct me to what region I can fly,
Where for my Sons find shelter, since their Sire
Attends nót to the welfare of his race.
Take pity on them, for you also know
What 'tis to be a Parent, and must feel
Parental love: as for myself, I heed not
The being doom'd to exile, but lament
Their hapless fortunes.

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CREON.

No tyrannic age
Within this bosom dwells, but pity oft
Hath warp'd my better judgement, and tho' now
My error I perceive, shall thy bequest
Be granted: yet of this must I forewarn thee;
If when to-morrow with his orient beams
Phœbus the world revisits, he shall view
Thee and thy children still within the bounds
Of these domains, thou certainly shalt die,
Th' irrevocable sentence is pronounc'd.
But if thou needs must tarry, tarry here
This single day, for in so short a space
Thou canst not execute the ills I dread. [*Exit* CREON.

CHORUS.

Alas! thou wretched woman, overpower'd
By thy afflictions, whither wilt thou turn,
What hospitable board, what mansion, find,
Or country to protect thee from these ills?
Into what storms of misery have the Gods
Caus'd thee to rush!

MEDEA.

On every side distress
Assails me: who can contradict this truth?
Yet think not that my sorrows thus shall end.
By yon new-wedded pair must be sustain'd
Dire conflicts, and no light or trivial woes
By them who in affinity are join'd
With this devoted house. Can ye suppose
That I would e'er have sooth'd him, had no gain
Or stratagem induc'd me? else to him
Never would I have spoken, nor once rais'd
My suppliant hands. But now is he so lost
In folly, that when all my schemes with ease
He might have baffled, if he from this land
Had cast me forth, he grants me to remain
For this one day, and ere the setting Sun,

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Three of thy foes will I destroy, the Sire,
The Daughter, and my (11) Husband: various mean
Have I of slaying them, and, O my friends,
Am at a loss to fix on which I first
Shall undertake, or to consume with flames
The bridal mansion, or a dagger plunge
Into their bosoms, entering unperceiv'd
The chamber where they sleep: but there remains
One danger to obstruct my path; if caught
Stealing into the palace, and intent
On such emprise, in death shall I afford
A subject of derision to my foes.
This obvious method were the best, in which
I am most skill'd, to take their lives away
By sorceries. Be it so; suppose them dead.
What city will receive me for its guest,
What hospitable foreigner afford
A shelter in his land, or to his hearth
Admit, or snatch me from impending fate?
Alas! I have no friend. I will delay
A little longer therefore, if perchance
To skreen me from destruction, I can find
Some fortress, then I in this deed of blood
With artifice and silence will engage.
But, if by woes inextricable urg'd
Two closely, snatching up the dagger, them
Am I resolv'd to slay, altho' myself
Must perish too; for courage unappall'd
This bosom animates: By that dread Queen,
By her whom first of all th' immortal Powers
I worship, and to aid my bold emprise

(11) "It may be asked how it came to pass, that Medea did not carry "into execution this threat of killing Jason. She was prevented by the "messenger, who, immediately after the deaths of Glancè and Creon, "terrified her by saying, it was necessary for her to fly with the utmost "speed; she therefore had not time to accomplish this design against "her husband." SCHOLIAST.

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Have chosen, the thrice aweful Hecaté
Who in my innermost apartment dwells,
Not one of them shall triumph in the pangs
With which they wound my heart; for I will render
This spousal rite to them a plenteous source
Of bitterness and mourning, they shall rue
Their union, rue my exile from this land.
But now come on, nor, O Medea, spare
Thy utmost science to devise and frame
Deep stratagems, with swift career advance
To deeds of horror. Such a strife demands
Thy utmost courage. Hast thou any sense
Of these indignities? nor is it fit
That thou, who spring'st from an illustrious Sire,
And from that great progenitor the (12) Sun,
Should'st be derided by the impious brood
Of (13) Sisyphus, at Jason's nuptial feast

(12) Hesiod, in his Generation of the Gods, informs us, that the Sun begot on Perseis one of the Daughters of Oceanus and Tethys, the enchantress Circe, and Æetes king of Colchos, and that Æetes, with the peculiar approbation of the Gods, married Idya, one of the sisters of his mother Perseis, and by her was father to Medea.

(13) Barnes in his note interprets this as spoken of Creon, whom he calls the son of Sisyphus; but the Scholiast, in his observations on the 20th verse of this Tragedy, asserts, that Creon's father was Lucaithus, who succeeded Bellerophon, Sisyphus's Grandson, in the throne of Corinth, but does not appear to have been of that family. It appears from Homer, that Bellerophon incurred the hatred of the Gods, and was expelled from his hereditary dominions; but that, in consequence of his having married the Daughter of Iobates king of Lycia, his two Grandsons Sarpedon and Glaucus were in possession of the sovereignty of that country at the time of the Trojan war, at which period it does not appear that any of the posterity of Sisyphus were left at Corinth. Jason may without any great impropriety be called Σισυφιος, as he was in fact the Great-nephew of Sisyphus; Apollodorus having informed us, that Sisyphus and Cretheus, whose son Æson was the father of Jason, were both of them sons of Æolus. These circumstances induce me to think that Σισυφιοι here means Jason. In Palmerius de Grentemesnil, Exercitationes in Auctores Græcos, it is supposed that the king of Corinth here spoken of is the elder Glaucus, who was the son of Sisyphus, and father to Bellerophon, and that he bore two names, or rather that the name of

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Expos'd to scorn: for thou hast ample skill
To right thyself. Altho' by nature form'd
Without a genius apt for virtuous deeds,
We women are in mischiefs most expert.

CHORUS.

O D E.

I. 1.

Now upward to their source the rivers flow,
And in a retrogade career
Justice and all the baffled virtues go.
The views of man are insincere,
Nor to the Gods tho' he appeal,
And with an oath each promise seal,
Can he be trusted. Yet doth veering Fame
Loudly assert the female claim,
Causing our sex to be renown'd,
And our whole lives with glory crown'd.
No longer shall we mourn the wrongs
Of slanderous and inhuman tongues.

I. 2.

Nor shall the Muses, as in (14) antient days,
Make the deceit of womankind

Creon is here given him by Euripides merely as King; Κρέων, regnans, imperans, dominus. This explanation accords much better than that of the Scholiast with the period of Medea's residence at Corinth, which was only a few years subsequent to the Argonautic expedition; but not with the usual accounts of the death of Glaucus, who is represented as having been torn in pieces by his mares called Potniades, from having been trained by him at Potnia, a city in Bœotia, who, according to one of the Scholiasts on the Phœnissæ, v. 1141. edit. King, became so furious, that they at length devoured their Lord.

(14) "Alluding to the Poems of Archilochus, who was an antient "writer in respect to Euripides, though not in respect to Medea." Dr. Musgrave. This Ode treating of the faults of the two sexes and their mutual reproaches, is particularly calculated to remind the reader of the controversy and festive taunts mentioned by Conon, as having passed between Medea and her female attendants on one part, and Jason and the comrades who sailed with him in the Argo on the other, after they had

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The constant theme of their malignant lays.
For ne'er on our uncultur'd mind
Hath Phœbus God of verse bestow'd
Genius to frame the lofty ode,
Else had we wak'd the lyre, and in reply
With descants on man's infamy
Oft lengthen'd out th' opprobrious page.
Yet may we from each distant age
Collect such records as disgrace
Both us and man's imperious race.

II. 1.

By love distracted, from thy native strand,
Thou 'twixt the ocean's clashing rocks did'st sail.
But now, loath'd inmate of a foreign land,
Thy treacherous Husband's loss art doom'd to wail:
O hapless matron overwhelm'd with woe,
From this unpitying realm dishonour'd must thou go.

II. 2.

No longer sacred oaths their credit bear,
And virtuous Shame hath left the Grecian plain,
She mounts to Heaven, and breathes a purer air.
For thee doth no paternal house remain
The sheltering haven from affliction's tides:
Over these hostile roofs a mightier Queen presides.

JASON, MEDEA, CHORUS.

JASON.

Not now for the first time, but oft, full oft
Have I observ'd that anger is a pest
The most unruly. For when in this land,
These mansions, you in peace might have abode,
By patiently submitting to the will

all escaped from imminent danger of shipwreck, and landed in the island of Anaphé, one of the Sporades, situated in the Cretan sea. The reader will find this history either in Hist. Poet. Script. p. 298. edit. Paris 1675, 8vo. or Photii Biblioth. p. 456. edit. Rothomagi 1653, folio.

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Of your superiors, you, for empty words,
Are doom'd to exile. Not that I regard
Your calling Jason with incessant rage
The worst of men: but for those bitter taunts
With which you have revil'd a mighty King,
Too mild a penalty may you esteem
Such banishment. I still have sooth'd the wrath
Of the offended Monarch, still have wish'd
That you might here continue: but no bounds
Your folly knows, nor can that tongue e'er cease
To utter menaces against your Lords:
Hence from these regions justly are you doom'd
To be cast forth. But with unwearied love
Attentive to your interest am I come,
Lest with your Children you by cruel want
Should be encompass'd: exile with it brings
Full many evils. Me, tho' you abhor,
To you I harbor no unfriendly thought.

MEDEA.

Thou worst of villains (for this bitter charge
Against thy abject cowardice my tongue
May justly urge), com'st thou to me, O wretch,
Who to the Gods art odious, and to me
And all the human race? it is no proof
Of courage, or of stedfastness, to face
Thy injur'd friends, but impudence the worst
Of all diseases. Yet hast thou done well
In coming: I by uttering the reproaches
Which thou deserv'st, shall ease my burden'd soul,
And thou wilt grieve to hear them. With th' events
Which happen'd first, will I begin my charge.
Each Grecian chief who in the Argo sail'd.
Knows how from death I sav'd thee, when to yoke
The raging bulls whose nostrils pour'd forth flames,
And sow the baleful harvest, thou wert sent:
Then having slain the Dragon, who preserv'd
With many a scaly fold the golden fleece,

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Nor ever clos'd in sleep his watchful eyes,
I caus'd the morn with its auspicious beams
To shine on thy deliverance; but my Sire
And native land betraying, came with thee
To Pelion, and Iolchos' gates: for love
Prevail'd o'er reason. Pelias next I slew,
Most wretched death, by his own Daughters' hands,
And thus deliver'd thee from all thy fears.
Yet tho' to me, O most ungrateful man,
Thus much indebted, hast thou prov'd a traitor,
And to the arms of this new Consort fled
Altho' a rising progeny is thine.
Hadst thou been childless, 'twere a venial fault
In thee to court another for thy Bride.
But vanish'd is the faith which oaths erst bore,
Nor can I judge, whether thou think'st the Gods
Who rul'd the world, have lost their antient power,
Or that fresh laws at present are in force
Among mankind, because thou to thyself
Art conscious, thou thy plighted faith hast broken.
O my right hand, which thou did'st oft embrace,
Oft to these knees a suppliant cling! how vainly
Did I my virgin purity yield up
To a perfidious Husband, led astray
By flattering hopes! yet I to thee will speak
As if thou wert a friend, and I expected
From thee some mighty favour to obtain:
Yet thou, if strictly question'd, must appear
More odious. Whither shall I turn me now?
To those deserted mansions of my Father,
Which, with my country, I to thee betray'd,
And hither came; or to the wretched Daughters
Of Pelias? they forsooth, whose Sire I slew,
Beneath their roofs with kindness would receive me.
'Tis even thus: by those of my own house
Am I detested, and, to serve thy cause,
Those very friends, whom least of all I ought

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To have unkindly treated, have I made
My enemies. But eager to repay
Such favors, 'mongst unnumber'd Grecian dames,
On me superior bliss hast thou bestow'd
And I, unhappy woman, find in thee
A Husband who deserves to be admir'd
For his fidelity. But from this realm
When I am exil'd, and by every friend
Deserted, with my Children left forlorn,
A glorious triumph, in thy bridal hour,
To thee will it afford, if those thy Sons,
And I who sav'd thee, should like vagrants roam.
Wherefore, O Jove, didst thou instruct mankind
How to distinguish by undoubted marks
Counterfeit gold, yet in the front of vice
Impress no brand to shew the tainted heart?

CHORUS.

How sharp their wrath, how hard to be appeas'd,
When friends with friends begin the cruel strife.

JASON.

I ought not to be rash it seems in speech,
But like the skilful pilot, who with sails
Scarce half unfurl'd, his bark more surely guides,
Escape, O woman, your ungovern'd tongue.
Since you the benefits on me conferr'd,
Exaggerate in so proud a strain, I deem
That I to Venus only, and no God
Or man beside, my prosperous voyage owe.
Altho' a wondrous subtlety of soul
To you belong, 'twere an invidious speech
For me to make, should I relate how Love
By his inevitable (15) shafts constrain'd you
To save my life. I will not therefore state

(15) The reading of Τοξους αφυκτους, instead of Ποσιν αφυκτοις, is adopted by Lascaris, one of the Scholiasts, Dr. Musgrave and Brunck, and, according to the two latter, authorised by a variety of manuscripts. Barnes and Carmelli have noticed, but not received it.

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This argument too nicely, but allow,
As you did aid me, it was kindly done.
But by preserving me have you gain'd more
Than you bestow'd, as I shall prove: and first
Transplanted from Barbaric shores you dwell
In Grecian regions, and have here been taught
To act as justice and the laws ordain,
Nor follow the caprice of brutal strength.
By all the Greeks your wisdom is perceiv'd,
And you acquire renown; but had you still
Inhabited that distant spot of earth,
You never had been nam'd. I would not wish
For mansions heap'd with gold, or to exceed
The sweetest notes of Orpheus' magic lyre,
Were those unfading wreaths which fame bestows,
From me withheld by Fortune. I thus far
On my own labors only have discours'd.
For you this odious strife of words began.
But in espousing Creon's royal Daughter,
With which you have reproach'd me, I will prove
That I in acting thus am wise and chaste,
That I to you have been the best of friends,
And to our Children. But make no reply.
Since hither from Iolchos' land I came,
Accompanied by many woes, and such
As could not be avoided, what device
More advantageous could an exile frame,
Than wedding the King's Daughter? Not thro' hate
To you, which you reproach me with, not smitten
With love for a new Consort, or a wish
The number of my Children to augment:
For those we have already might suffice,
And I complain not. But to me it seem'd
Of great importance, that we both might live
As suits our rank, nor suffer abject need,
Well knowing that each friend avoids the poor.
I also wish'd to educate our Sons

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In such a manner as befits my race,
And with their noble Brothers yet unborn,
Make them one family, that thus my house
Cementing, I might prosper. In some measure,
Is it your interest too that by my Bride
I should have Sons, and me it much imports,
By future Children, to provide for those
Who are in being. Have I judg'd amiss?
You would not censure me, unless your soul
Were by a rival stung. But your whole sex
Hath these ideas; if in marriage blest
Ye deem nought wanting: but if some reverse
Of fortune e'er betide the nuptial couch,
All that was good and lovely ye abhor.
Far better were it for the human race,
Had Children been produc'd by other means,
No (16) females e'er existing: hence might man,
Exempt from every evil have remain'd.

CHORUS.

Thy words hast thou with specious art adorn'd,
Yet thou to me, (it is against my will

(16) "As extraordinary as it may appear, yet two of the greatest "Poets that England ever saw, have imitated this sentiment.

"Is there no way for men to be, but women
"Must be half-workers?" SHAKESPEARE, Cymbeline.

"O why did God,
"Creator wise, that peopled highest Heaven
"With spirits masculine, create at last
"This novelty on earth, this fair defect
"Of nature, and not fill the world at first
"With men as angels without feminine,
"Or find some other way to generate
"Mankind?" MILTON.

Upton's preface to his observations on Shakespeare.

The reader will again meet with the same idea, which is drawn out to a much greater length by Euripides in his Hippolytus; whence Amadis Jamyn, a French Poet of no inconsiderable eminence in the sixteenth century, has borrowed some of the most striking passages in his "Misogame." See his Oeuvres Poetiques, 4to. p. 237. Paris, 1575.

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That I such language hold) O Jason, seem'st
Not to have acted justly in betraying
Thy Consort.

MEDEA.

From the many I dissent
In many points: for in my judgement, he
Who tramples on the laws, but can express
His thoughts with plausibility, deserves
Severest punishment: for that injustice
On which he glories, with his artful tongue,
That he a fair appearance can bestow,
He dares to practise, nor is truly wise.
No longer then this specious language hold
To me, who by one word can strike thee dumb.
Had'st thou not acted with a base design,
It was thy duty first to have prevail'd
On me to give consent, ere these espousals
Thou had'st contracted, nor kept such design
A secret from thy friends.

JASON.

You would have serv'd
My cause most gloriously, had I disclos'd
To you my purpos'd nuptials, when the rage
Of that proud heart still unsubdued remains.

MEDEA.

Thy real motive was not what thou say'st,
But a Barbarian wife, in thy (17) old age,
Might have appear'd to tarnish thy renown.

JASON.

Be well assur'd, love urg'd me not to take
The Daughter of the monarch to my bed.
But 'twas my wish to save you from distress,
As I already have declar'd, and raise

(17) "Why in old age?" I imagine because they who are advanced "in years are wont to be influenced not by love but by ambition."
Dr. MUSGRAVE.

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Some royal Brothers to our former Sons,
Strengthening with fresh supports our shatter'd house.

MEDEA.

May that prosperity which brings remorse
Be never mine, nor riches such as sting
The soul with anguish.

JASON.

Are you not aware
You soon will change your mind and grow more wise?
Forbear to spurn the blessings you possess,
Nor droop beneath imaginary woes,
When you are happy.

MEDEA.

Scoff at my distress,
For thou hast an asylum to receive thee:
But from this land am I constrain'd to roam
A lonely exile.

JASON.

This was your own choice:
Accuse none else.

MEDEA.

What have I done; betray'd
My plighted faith, and sought a foreign bed?

JASON.

You utter'd impious curses 'gainst the King.

MEDEA.

I also in thy mansions am accurs'd.

JASON.

With you I on these subjects will contend
No longer. But speak freely, what relief,
Or for the children or your exil'd state,
You from my prosperous fortunes would receive:
For with a liberal hand am I inclin'd
My bounties to confer, and hence dispatch
Such tokens, as to hospitable kindness
Will recommend you. Woman, to refuse
These offers were mere folly; from your soul

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Banish resentment, and no trifling gain
Will hence ensue.

MEDEA.

No use I of thy friends
Will make, nor aught accept; thy presents spare,
For nothing which the wicked man can give
Proves beneficial.

JASON.

I invoke the Gods
To witness that I gladly would supply
You and your Children with whate'er ye need:
But you these favors loathe, and with disdain
Repell your friends: hence an increase of woe
Shall be your lot.

MEDEA.

Be gone; for thou with love
For thy young Bride inflam'd, too long remain'st
Without the palace: wed her: tho' perhaps
(Yet with submission to the righteous Gods,
This I announce) such marriage thou may'st rue.

[*Exit* JASON.

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. 1.

Th' immoderate Loves in their career,
Nor glory nor esteem attends,
But when the Cyprian Queen descends
Benignant from her starry sphere,
No Goddess can more justly claim
From man the grateful prayer.
Thy wrath, O Venus, still forbear,
Nor at my tender bosom aim
That venom'd arrow, ever wont t' inspire,
Wing'd from thy golden bow, the pangs of keen desire.

I. 2.

May I in modesty delight,
Best present which the Gods can give,

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Nor torn by jarring passions live
A prey to wrath and canker'd spite,
Still envious of a rival's charms,
Nor rouse the endless strife
While on my soul another Wife,
Impresses vehement alarms:
On us, dread Queen, thy mildest influence shed,
Thou who discern'st each crime that stains the nuptial bed.

II. 1.

My native land, and dearest home!
May I ne'er know an exil'd state,
Nor be it ever my sad fate,
While from thy well-known bourn I roam,
My hopeless anguish to bemoan.
Rather let death, let death
Take at that hour my forfeit breath,
For surely never was there known
On earth a curse so great, as to exceed
From his lov'd country torn, the wretched exile's need.

II. 2.

These eyes attest thy piteous tale,
Which not from fame alone we know;
But, O thou royal Dame, thy woe
No generous city doth bewail,
Nor one among thy former friends.
Abhorr'd by Heaven and Earth,
Perish the wretch devoid of worth,
Engross'd by mean and selfish ends,
Whose heart expands not, those he lov'd, to aid;
Never may I lament attachments thus repaid.

ÆGEUS, MEDEA, CHORUS.

ÆGEUS.

Medea, hail! for no man can devise
Terms more auspicious to accost his friends,

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MEDEA.

And you, O Son of wise Pandion, hail
Illustrious Ægeus. But to these domains
Whence came you?

ÆGEUS.

From Apollo's antient shrine.

MEDEA.

But to that centre of the world, whence sounds
Prophetic issue, why did you repair?

ÆGEUS.

To question by what means I may obtain
A race of Children.

MEDEA.

By the Gods inform me,
Are you still doom'd to drag a childless life?

ÆGEUS.

Such is the influence of some adverse Demon.

MEDEA.

Have you a Wife, or did you never try
The nuptial yoke?

ÆGEUS,

With wedlock's sacred bonds
I am not unacquainted.

MEDEA

On the subject
Of Children, what did Phœbus say?

ÆGEUS.

His words
Were such as mortals cannot comprehend.

MEDEA.

Am I allow'd to know the God's reply?

ÆGEUS.

Thou surely art: such mystery to expound
There needs the help of thy sagacious soul.

MEDEA.

Inform me what the oracle pronounc'd,
If I may hear it.

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ÆGEUS.

" The projecting foot,
" Thou, of the vessel must not dare to loose—

MEDEA.

Till you do what, or to what region come?

ÆGEUS.

" Till thou return to thy paternal Lares."

MEDEA.

But what are you in need of, that you steer
Your bark to Corinth's shores?

ÆGEUS.

A King, whose name
Is Pittheus, o'er Trœzene's realm presides.

MEDEA.

That most religious man, they say, is Son
Of Pelops.

ÆGEUS.

I with him would fain discuss
The God's prophetic voice,

MEDEA.

For he is wise,
And in this science long hath been expert.

ÆGEUS.

Dearest to me of those with whom I form'd
A league of friendship in the embattled field.

MEDEA.

But, O may you be happy, and obtain
All that you wish for.

ÆGEUS.

Why those downcast eyes,
That wasted form?

MEDEA.

O Ægeus, he I wedded,
To me hath prov'd of all mankind most base.

ÆGEUS.

What mean'st thou? In plain terms thy grief declare.

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MEDEA.

Jason hath wrong'd me, tho' without a cause.

ÆGEUS.

Be more explicit, what injurious treatment
Complain'st thou of?

MEDEA.

To me hath he preferr'd
Another Wife, the mistress of this house.

ÆGEUS.

Dar'd he to act so basely?

MEDEA.

Be assur'd
That I whom erst he lov'd, am now forsaken.

ÆGEUS.

What amorous passion triumphs o'er his soul?
Or doth he loathe thy bed?

MEDEA.

'Tis mighty love,
That to his first attachment makes him false.

ÆGEUS.

Let him depart then, if he be so void
Of honor as thou say'st.

MEDEA.

He sought to form
Alliance with a monarch.

ÆGEUS.

Who bestows
On him a royal Bride? conclude thy tale.

MEDEA.

Creon, the ruler of this land.

ÆGEUS.

Thy sorrows
Are then excusable.

MEDEA.

I am undone,
And banish'd hence.

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ÆGEUS.

By whom? there's not a word
Thou utter'st but unfolds fresh scenes of woe.

MEDEA.

Me from this realm to exile Creon drives.

ÆGEUS.

Doth Jason suffer this? I cannot praise
Such conduct.

MEDEA.

Not in words: tho' he submits
Without reluctance. But I by that beard,
And by those knees, a wretched suppliant, crave
Your pity, see me not cast forth forlorn,
But to your realms and to your social hearth
Receive me as a guest; so may your wish
For children be accomplish'd by the Gods,
And happiness your close of life attend.
But how important a discovery Fortune
To you here makes, you are not yet appriz'd:
For destitute of heirs will I permit you
No longer to remain, but thro' my aid
Shall you have sons, such potent drugs I know.

ÆGEUS.

Various inducements urge me to comply
With this request, O woman; first an awe
For the immortal Gods, and then the hope
That I the promis'd issue shall obtain.
On what my senses scarce can comprehend
I will rely. O that thy arts may prove
Effectual! Thee, if haply thou arriv'st
In my domain, with hospitable rites,
Shall it be my endeavor to receive,
As justice dictates: but to thee, thus much
It previously behoves me to announce:
I will not take thee with me from this realm;
But to my house if of thyself thou come,

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Thou a secure asylum there shalt find,
Nor will I yield thee up to any foe.
But hence without my aid must thou depart,
For I, from those who in this neighbouring land
Of Corinth entertain me as their guest,
Wish to incur no censure.

MEDEA.

Your commands
Shall be obey'd: but would you plight your faith
That you this promise will to me perform,
A noble friend in you shall I have found.

ÆGEUS.

Believ'st thou not? whence rise these anxious doubts?

MEDEA.

In you I trust; tho' Pelias' hostile race,
And Creon's hate pursue me: but, if bound
By the firm sanction of a solemn oath,
You will not suffer them with brutal force
To drag me from your realm, but having enter'd
Into such compact, and by every God
Sworn to protect me, still remain a friend,
Nor hearken to their embassies. My fortune
Is in its wane, but wealth to them belongs,
And an imperial mansion.

ÆGEUS.

In these words
Hast thou express'd great forethought: but if thus
Thou art dispos'd to act, I my consent
Will not refuse; for I shall be more safe,
If to thy foes some plausible excuse
I can allege, and thee more firmly stablish.
But say thou first what Gods I shall invoke.

MEDEA.

Swear by the Earth on which we tread, the Sun
My Grandsire, and by all the race of Gods.

ÆGEUS.

What action, or to do, or to forbear?

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MEDEA.

That from your land you never will expel,
Nor while you live consent that any foe
Shall tear me thence.

ÆGEUS.

By Earth, the radiant Sun,
And every God I swear, I to the terms
Thou hast propos'd will stedfastly adhere.

MEDEA.

This may suffice. But what if you infringe
Your oath, what punishment will you endure?

ÆGEUS.

Each curse that can befall the impious man.

MEDEA.

Depart, and prosper: all things now advance
In their right track, and with the utmost speed
I to your city will direct my course,
When I have executed those designs
I meditate, and compass'd what I wish. [*Exit* ÆGEUS.

CHORUS.

But thee, O King, may Maia's winged Son
Lead to thy Athens, there may'st thou attain
All that thy soul desires, for thou to me,
O Ægeus, seem'st most generous.

MEDEA.

Aweful Jove,
Thou too, O Justice, who art ever join'd
With thundering Jove, and bright Hyperion's beams,
You I invoke: now, O my friends, o'er those
I hate shall we prevail: 'tis the career
Of victory that we tread, and I at length
Have hopes the strictest vengeance on my foes
To execute: for where we most in need
Of a protector stood, appear'd this stranger,
The haven of my counsels: we shall fix
Our cables to this poop, soon as we reach
That hallow'd city where Minerva reigns.

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But now to you the whole of my designs
Will I relate; look not for such a tale
As yields delight: some servant will I send
An interview with Jason to request,
And on his coming, in the softest words
Address him; say, these matters are well pleasing
To me, and in the strongest terms applaud
That marriage with the Daughter of the King,
Which now the traitor celebrates; then add,
" 'Tis for our mutual good, 'tis rightly done."
But the request which I intend to make,
Is that he here will let my Children stay;
Not that I mean to leave them thus behind
Expos'd to insults in a hostile realm,
From those I hate; but that my arts may slay
The royal Maid: with presents in their hands,
A vesture finely wrought and golden crown,
Will I dispatch them; these they to the Bride
Shall bear, that she their exile may reverse:
If these destructive ornaments she take
And put them on, both she, and every one
Who touches her, shall miserably perish:
My presents with such drugs I will anoint.
Far as to this relates, here ends my speech.
But I with anguish think upon a deed
Of more than common horror, which remains
By me to be accomplish'd: for my Sons
Am I resolv'd to slay, them from this arm
Shall no man rescue: when I thus have fill'd
With dire confusion Jason's wretched house,
I, from this land, yet reeking with the gore
Of my dear Sons, will fly, and having dar'd
A deed most impious. For the scornful taunts
Of those we hate are not to be endur'd,
Happen what may. Can life be any gain
To me who have no country left, no home,
No place of refuge? Greatly did I err

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When I forsook the mansions of my Sire,
Persuaded by the flattery of that Greek
Whom I will punish, if just Heaven permit.
For he shall not again behold the Children
I bore him while yet living. From his Bride
Nor shall there issue any second race;
Since that vile woman, by my baleful drugs
Vilely to perish, have the Fates ordain'd.
None shall think lightly of me, as if weak,
Of courage void, or with a soul too tame,
But form'd by Heaven in a far different mould,
The terror of my foes, and to my friends
Benignant: for most glorious are the lives
Of those who act with such determin'd zeal.

CHORUS.

Since thy design thus freely thou to us
Communicat'st, I thro' a wish to serve
Thy interests, and a reverence for those laws
Which all mankind hold sacred, from thy purpose
Exhort thee to desist.

MEDEA.

This cannot be:
Yet I from you, because ye have not felt
Distress like mine, such language can excuse.

CHORUS.

Thy guiltless Children wilt thou dare to slay?

MEDEA.

My Husband hence more deeply shall I wound.

CHORUS.

But thou wilt of all women be most wretched.

MEDEA.

No matter: all the counsels ye can give
Are now superfluous. But this instant go
And Jason hither bring: for on your faith,
In all things I depend; nor these resolves
Will you divulge if you your mistress love,
And feel a woman's interest in my wrongs.

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CHORUS.

O D E.

I. 1.

Heroes of Erectheus' race,
To the Gods who owe your birth,
And in a long succession trace
Your sacred origin from Earth,
Who on wisdom's fruit regale,
Purest breezes still inhale,
And behold skies ever bright,
Wandering thro' those haunted glades,
Where fame relates that the Pierian maids,
Soothing the soul of man with chaste delight,
Taught Harmony to breathe her first enchanting tale.

I. 2.

From Cephisus's amber tide,
At the Cyprian Queen's command,
As sing the Muses, are supplied
To refresh the thirsty land,
Fragrant gales of temperate air;
While around her auburn hair,
In a vivid chaplet twin'd
Never-fading roses bloom
And scent the champaign with their rich perfume:
Love comes in unison with Wisdom join'd,
Each virtue thrives if Beauty lend her fostering care.

II. 1.

For its holy streams renown'd
Can that city, can that state
Where friendship's generous train are found
Shelter thee from public hate,
When, defil'd with horrid guilt,
Thou thy children's blood hast spilt?
Think on this atrocious deed
Ere thy dagger aim the blow:
Around thy knees our suppliant arms we throw;
O doom not, doom them not to bleed.

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II. 2.

How can thy relentless heart
All humanity disclaim,
Thy lifted arm perform its part?
Lost to a sense of honest shame,
Canst thou take their lives away,
And these guiltless children slay?
Soon as thou thy Sons shalt view,
How wilt thou the tear restrain,
Or with their blood thy ruthless hands distain,
When prostrate they for mercy sue?

JASON, MEDEA, CHORUS.

JASON.

I at your call am come: for tho' such hate
To me you bear, you shall not be denied
In this request: but let me hear what else
You would solicit.

MEDEA.

Jason, I of thee
Crave pardon for the hasty words I spoke:
Since just it were that thou should'st bear my wrath,
When by such mutual proofs of love, our union
Hath been cemented. For I reason'd thus,
And in these terms reproach'd myself; "O wretch,
"Wretch that I am, what madness fires my breast?
"Or why 'gainst those who counsel me aright
"Such fierce resentment harbour? what just cause
"Have I to hate the rulers of this land,
"My Husband too, who acts but for my good
"In his espousals with the royal maid,
"That to my Sons he hence may add a race
"Of noble Brothers? shall not I appease
"The tempest of my soul? why, when the Gods
"Confer their choicest blessings, should I grieve?
"Have not I helpless children? well I know
"That we are banish'd from Thessalia's realm

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" And left without a friend." When I these thoughts
Maturely had revolv'd, I saw how great
My folly, and how groundless was my wrath.
Now therefore I commend, now deem thee wise
In forming this connection for my sake:
But I was void of wisdom, or had borne
A part in these designs, the genial bed
Obsequiously attended, and with joy
Perform'd each menial office for the Bride.
I will not speak in too reproachful terms
Of my own sex: but we, weak women, are
What nature form'd us: therefore our defects
Thou must not imitate, nor yet return
Folly for folly. I submit and own
My judgement was erroneous, but at length
Have I form'd better counsels. O my Sons,
Come hither, leave the palace, from those doors
Advance, and in a soft persuasive strain
With me unite, your Father to accost,
Forget past enmity, and to your friends
Be reconcil'd, for 'twixt us is a league
Of peace establish'd, and my wrath subsides.

The Sons of JASON *and* MEDEA *enter.*

Take hold of his right hand. Ah me, how great
Are my afflictions oft as I revolve
A deed of darkness in my labouring soul!
How long, alas! my Sons, are ye ordain'd
To live, how long to stretch forth those dear arms?
Wretch that I am! how much am I dispos'd
To weep! how subject to each fresh alarm!
For I at length desisting from that strife,
Which with your Sire I rashly did maintain,
Feel gushing tears bedew my tender cheek.

CHORUS.

Fresh tears too from these eyes have forc'd their way:
And may no greater ill than that which now
We suffer, overtake us!

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JASON.

I applaud
Your present conduct, and your former rage
Condemn not: for 'tis natural, that the race
Of women should be angry, when their Lord
For a new Consort trucks them. But your heart
Is for the better chang'd, and you, tho' late,
At length acknowledge the resistless power
Of reason; this is acting like a dame
Endued with prudence. But for you, my Sons,
Abundant safety your considerate Sire
Hath with the favor of the Gods procur'd,
For ye, I trust, shall with my future race
Bear the first rank in this Corinthian realm.
Advance to full maturity; the rest,
Aided by each benignant God, your Father
Shall soon accomplish. Virtuously train'd up
May I behold you at a riper age
Obtain pre-eminence o'er those I hate.
But, ha! why with fresh tears do you thus keep
Those eye-lids moist? from your averted cheeks
Why is the colour fled, or why these words
Receive you not with a complacent ear?

MEDEA.

Nothing: my thoughts were busied for these children.

JASON.

Be of good courage, and for them depend
On my protecting care.

MEDEA.

I will obey,
Nor disbelieve the promise thou hast made:
But woman, ever (18) frail, is prone to shed
Involuntary tears.

(18 Brunck, instead of θηλυ, reads θηλυς, from manuscripts, and observes that the word, without reference to the sex, here signifies "weak," as αρσην frequently does "strong," which he instances in their being contrasted in the Orestes of our Author, v. 1204, 1205, edit. Barnes; to

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JASON.

But why bewail
With such deep groans these children?

MEDEA.

Them I bore;
And that our Sons might live, while to the Gods
Thou didst address thy vows, a pitying thought
Enter'd my soul; 'twas whether this could be.
But of th' affairs on which thou com'st to hold
This conference with me, have I told a part
Already, and to thee will now disclose
The sequel: since the rulers of this land
Resolve to banish me, as well I know
That it were best for me to give no umbrage,
Or to the king of Corinth, or to thee,
By dwelling here: because I to this house
Seem to bear enmity, from these domains
Will I depart: but urge thy suit to Creon,
That under thy paternal care our Sons
May be train'd up, nor from this realm expell'd.

JASON

Tho' doubtful of success, I yet am bound
To make th' attempt.

MEDEA.

Thou rather should'st enjoin
Thy Bride, her royal Father to entreat,
That he these Children's exile may reverse.

JASON.

With pleasure; and I doubt not, but on her,
If like her sex humane, I shall prevail.

MEDEA.

To aid thee in this difficult emprise
Shall be my care, for I to her will send
Gifts that I know in beauty far exceed
The gorgeous works of man; a tissued vest

which may be added ωλκας χλιτμους δηλυς, "hair weakened by frequent "combing." ELECTRA, v. 529.

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And golden crown, the children shall present:
But with the utmost speed, these ornaments
One of thy menial train must hither bring:
For not with one, but with ten thousand blessings
Shall she be gratified; thee best of men
Obtaining for the partner of her bed,
And in possession of those splendid robes
Which erst the Sun my Grandsire did bestow
On his descendants: take them in your hands,
My Children, to the happy royal Bride
Instantly bear them, and in dower bestow,
For such a gift as ought not to be scorn'd
Shall she receive.

JASON.

Why rashly part with these?
Of tissued robes or gold can you suppose
The palace destitute? these trappings keep,
Nor to another give: for if the Dame
On me place real value, well I know
My love she to all treasures will prefer.

MEDEA.

Speak not so hastily: the Gods themselves
By gifts are sway'd, as fame relates; and gold
Hath a far greater influence o'er the souls
Of mortals than the most persuasive words:
With Fortune, the propitious Heavens conspire
To add fresh glories to thy youthful Bride,
All here submits to her despotic sway.
But I my Children's exile would redeem,
Tho' at the cost of life, not gold alone.
But these adjacent mansions of the King
Soon as ye enter, O ye little ones,
Your Sire's new Consort and my Queen, entreat,
That ye may not be banish'd from this land:
At the same time these ornaments present,
For most important is it that these gifts
With her own hands the royal Dame receive.

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Go forth, delay not, and, if ye succeed,
Your Mother with the welcome tidings greet.

[*Exeunt* JASON *and* SONS.

CHORUS.

O D E.

I. 1.

Now from my soul each hope is fled,
I deem those hapless Children dead,
They rush to meet the wound:
Mistrustful of no latent pest
Th' exulting Bride will seize the gorgeous vest,
Her auburn tresses crown'd
By baleful Pluto, shall she stand,
And take the presents with an eager hand.

I. 2.

The splendid robe of thousand dyes
Will fascinate her raptur'd eyes,
And tempt her till she wear
The golden diadem, array'd
To meet her Bridegroom in th' infernal shade
She thus into the snare
Of death shall be surpris'd by fate,
Nor scape remorseless Atè's direful hate.

II. 1.

But as for thee whose nuptials bring
The proud alliance of a King,
'Midst dangers unespied
Thou madly rushing, aid'st the blow
Ordain'd by Heaven to lay thy Children low,
And thy lamented Bride:
O man, how little dost thou know
That o'er thy head impends severest woe!

II. 2.

Thy anguish I no less bemoan,
No less for thee, O Mother, groan,
Bent on an horrid deed,

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Thy Children who resolv'st to slay,
Nor fear'st to take their guiltless lives away.
Those innocents must bleed,
Because, disdainful of thy charms,
The Husband flies to a new Consort's arms.

ATTENDANT, SONS, MEDEA, CHORUS.

ATTENDANT.

Your Sons, my honour'd Mistress, are set free
From banishment; in her own hands those gifts
With courtesy the royal Bride receiv'd;
Hence have your Sons obtain'd their peace.

MEDEA.

No matter.

ATTENDANT.

Why stand you in confusion, when befriended
By prosperous Fortune (19)?

MEDEA.

Ah!

ATTENDANT.

This harsh reception
Accords not with the tidings which I bring.

MEDEA.

Alas! and yet again I say, alas!

ATTENDANT.

Have I related with unconscious tongue
Some great calamity, by the fond hope
Of bearing glad intelligence, misled?

MEDEA.

For having told what thou hast told, no blame
To thee do I impute.

(19) I have here omitted two lines inserted in the text as the remainder of the Attendant's speech, they having been put into the mouth of Jason, with a very small variation, v. 923 and 924, of Barnes's edition, and are hence supposed by Valkenaer and Pierson in his Verisimilia, to have been here interpolated by the mere blunder of some transcribers. Dr. Musgrave, in a great measure, accedes to their opinion; and Brunck has adopted it by leaving them out of his edition.

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ATTENDANT.

But on the ground
Why fix those eyes, and shed abundant tears?

MEDEA.

Necessity constrains me: for the Gods
Of Erebus, and I in evil hour,
Our baleful machinations have devis'd.

ATTENDANT.

Be of good cheer; for in your children still
Are you successful.

MEDEA.

'Midst the realms of night
Others I first will plunge. Ah, wretched me!

ATTENDANT.

Not you alone are from your children torn,
Mortal you are, and therefore must endure
Calamity with patience.

MEDEA.

I these counsels
Will practise: but go thou into the palace,
And for the children whatsoe'er to-day
Is requisite, make ready. [*Exit* ATTENDANT.
O my Sons!
My Sons, ye have a city and a house
Where, leaving hapless me behind, without
A Mother ye for ever shall reside.
But I to other realms an exile go,
Ere any (20) help from you I could derive,
Or see you blest; the hymeneal pomp,
The bride, the genial couch, for you adorn,

(20) The word ωνασθαι, which the antient Latin version, published under the name of Dorotheus Camillus, renders freta sim, (conformably to the most frequent interpretation of the verb ονημι, "juvo," as in Homer's ninth book of the Iliad, where, speaking of Prayers, the Daughters of Jupiter, he says, τουτε μεγ' ωνησιν, "hunc valde juvant,") is translated by the modern editors "capere voluptatem," which essentially alters the sense, and gives it a turn which I apprehend to be widely different from Medea's meaning, as she soon after speaks of the pleasure she receives from the caresses of her children.

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And in these hands the kindled torch sustain.
How wretched am I thro' my own perverseness!
You, O my Sons, I then in vain have nurtur'd,
In vain have toil'd, and, wasted with fatigue,
Suffer'd the pregnant matron's grievous throes.
On you, in my afflictions, many hopes
I founded erst; that ye with pious care
Would foster my old age, and on the bier
Extend me after death; much envied lot
Of mortals: but these pleasing anxious thoughts
Are vanish'd now; for, losing you, a life
Of bitterness and anguish shall I lead.
But as for you, my Sons, with those dear eyes
Fated no more your Mother to behold,
Hence are ye hastening to a world unknown.
Why do ye gaze on me with such a look
Of tenderness, or wherefore smile? for these
Are your last smiles. Ah wretched, wretched me!
What shall I do? my resolution fails.
Sparkling with joy now I their looks have seen,
My friends, I can no more. To those past schemes
I bid adieu, and with me from this land
My children will convey. Why should I cause
A twofold portion of distress to fall
On my own head, that I may grieve the Sire
By punishing his Sons? this shall not be.
Such counsels I dismiss. But in my purpose
What means this change? can I prefer derision,
And with impunity permit the foe
To 'scape? my utmost courage I must rouse:
For the suggestion of these tender thoughts
Proceeds from an enervate heart. My Sons,
Enter the regal mansion. [*Exeunt* SONS.
As for (21) those

(21) According to the Scholiast, the Poet speaks thus on account of their being Gods, who were considered as delighting in human blood, as the Furies, Mars, and some others. Medea therefore warns those of a milder disposition to keep aloof from her purposed sacrifice of her Sons.

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Who deem that to be present were unholy
While I the destin'd victims offer up,
Let them see to it. This uplifted arm
Shall never shrink. Alas! alas! my soul
Commit not such a deed. Unhappy woman,
Desist and spare thy Children; we will live
Together, they in foreign realms shall cheer
Thy exile.—No, by those avenging Fiends
Who dwell with Pluto in the realms beneath,
This shall not be, nor will I ever leave
My Sons to be insulted by their foes.
They certainly must die; since then they must,
I bore, and I will slay them: 'tis a deed
Resolv'd on, nor my purpose will I change.
Full well I know that now the royal Bride
Wears on her head the magic diadem,
And in the variegated robe expires:
But hurried on by fate, I tread a path
Of utter wretchedness, and them will plunge
Into one yet more wretched. To my Sons
Fain would I say; "O stretch forth your right hands,
" Ye Children, for your Mother to embrace.
" O dearest hands, ye lips to me most dear
" Engaging features, and ingenuous looks,
" May ye be blest, but in another world;
" For by the treacherous conduct of your Sire,
" Are ye bereft of all this earth bestow'd.
" Farewell, sweet kisses; tender limbs, farewell,
" And fragrant breath! I never more can bear
" To look on you, my Children." My afflictions
Have conquer'd me; I now am well aware
What crimes I venture on: but rage, the cause
Of woes most grievous to the human race,
Over my better reason hath prevail'd.

CHORUS.

In subtle questions I full many a time
Have heretofore engag'd, and this great point

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Debated, (22) whether woman should extend
Her search into abstruse and hidden truths.
But we too have a Muse, who with our sex
Associates, to expound the mystic lore
Of wisdom, tho' she dwell not with us all.
Yet haply a small number may be found,
Among the multitude of females, dear
To the celestial Muses. I maintain,
They who in total inexperience live,
Nor ever have been Parents, are more happy
Than they to whom much progeny belongs.
Because the childless, having never tried
Whether more pain or pleasure from their offspring
To mortals rises, 'scape unnumber'd toils.
But I observe that they, whose fruitful house
Is with a lovely race of infants fill'd,
Are harrass'd with perpetual cares; how first
To train them up in virtue, and whence leave
Fit portions for their Sons; but on the good
Or worthless, whether they these toils bestow
Remains involv'd in doubt. I yet must name
One evil the most grievous, to which all
The human race is subject; some there are
Who for their Sons have gain'd sufficient wealth,
Seen them to full maturity advance,
And deck'd with every virtue, when, by Fate
If thus it be ordain'd, comes Death unseen
And hurries them to Pluto's gloomy realm.
Can it be any profit to the Gods
To heap the loss of Children, that one ill
Than all the rest more bitter, on mankind?

(22) Both Dr. Musgrave and Brunck have altered ἢ, "whether," into ἤ, "than," for which the former cites as his authority only one of the Parisian manuscripts, admitting that the others concur with Lascaris, Aldus, and the rest of the editors who preceded him in reading ἢ: there seems to be no reason for bestowing the term of "optime" on this variation, which I cannot but think detrimental to the context, as the Chorus are going on with their enquiries into the expediency of female learning.

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MEDEA.

My friends, with anxious expectation long
Here have I waited, from within to learn
How fortune will dispose the dread event.
But one of Jason's servants I behold
With breathless speed advancing: his looks shew
That he some recent mischief would relate.

MESSENGER, MEDEA, CHORUS.

MESSENGER.

O thou, who impiously hast wrought a deed
Of horror, fly, Medea, from this land,
Fly with such haste as not to (21) leave the bark,
Or from the car alight.

MEDEA.

What crime, to merit
A banishment like this, have I committed?

MESSENGER.

By thy enchantments is the royal maid
This instant dead, and Creon too her Sire.

MEDEA.

Most glorious are the tidings you relate:
Henceforth shall you be number'd with my friends
And benefactors.

MESSENGER.

Ha! what words are these?
Dost thou preserve thy senses yet entire?
O woman, hath not madness fir'd thy brain?
The wrongs thou to the royal house hast done
Hear'st thou with joy, nor shudder'st at the tale?

MEDEA.

Somewhat I have in answer to your speech:
But be not too precipitate, my friend;

(23) The interpretation I have here followed is that of Brunck, according to whom the Messenger is advising Medea by no means to bring her ship to land, or stop her chariot, till she is safe from being pursued and overtaken either by Jason or the inhabitants of Corinth.

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Inform me how they died, for twofold joy
Wilt thou afford, if wretchedly they perish'd.

MESSENGER.

When with their Father thy two Sons arriv'd
And went into the mansion of the Bride,
We servants, who had shar'd thy griefs, rejoic'd;
For a loud rumour instantly prevail'd,
That all past strife betwixt thy Lord and thee
Was reconcil'd. Some kiss'd the Children's hands,
And some their auburn tresses. I with joy
To those apartments where the women dwell
Attended them. Our Mistress, the new object
Of homage such as erst to thee was paid,
Ere she beheld thy Sons, on Jason cast
A look of fond desire: but then she veil'd
Her eyes, and turn'd her pallid cheeks away
Disgusted at their coming, till his voice
Appeas'd her anger with these gentle words;
" O be not thou inveterate 'gainst thy friends,
" But lay aside disdain, thy beauteous face
" Turn hither, and let amity for those
" Thy Husband loves still warm that generous breast.
" Accept these gifts, and to thy Father sue,
" That, for my sake, the exile of my Sons
" He will remit." Soon as the Princess saw
Thy glittering ornaments, she could resist
No longer, but to all her Lord's requests
Assented, and before thy Sons were gone
Far from the regal mansion with their Sire
The vest resplendent with a thousand dyes
Put on, and o'er her loosely floating hair
Placing the golden crown, before the mirror
Her tresses braided, and with smiles survey'd
Th' inanimated semblance of her charms:
Then rising from her seat across the palace
Walk'd with a delicate and graceful step,
In the rich gifts exulting, and oft turn'd

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Enraptur'd eyes on her own stately neck
Reflected to her view: but now a scene
Of horror follow'd; her complexion chang'd,
And she reel'd backward, trembling every limb;
Scarce did her chair receive her as she sunk
In time to save her falling to the ground.
One of her menial train, an aged dame,
Possest with an idea that the wrath
Either of Pan or of some God unknown
Her mistress had invaded, in shrill tone
Pour'd forth a vow to Heaven, till from her mouth
She saw foam issue, in their sockets roll
Her wildly glaring eye-balls, and the blood
Leave her whole frame; a shriek that differ'd far
From her first plaints, then gave she. In an instant
This to her Father's house, and that to tell
The Bridegroom the mischance which had befallen
His Consort, rush'd impetuous; thro' the dome
The frequent steps of those who to and fro
Ran in confusion did resound. But soon
As the fleet courser at the goal arrives,
She who was silent, and had clos'd her eyes,
Rous'd from her swoon, and burst forth into groans
Most dreadful, for 'gainst her two evils warr'd:
Plac'd on her head the golden crown pour'd forth
A wondrous torrent of devouring flames,
And the embroider'd robes, thy Children's gifts,
Prey'd on the hapless virgin's tender flesh;
Cover'd with fire she started from her seat
Shaking her hair, and from her head the crown
With violence attempting to remove,
But still more firmly did the heated gold
Adhere, and the fann'd blaze with double lustre
Burst forth as she her streaming tresses shook:
Subdued by fate, at length she to the ground
Fell prostrate: scarce could any one have known her
Except her Father; for those radiant eyes

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Dropp'd from their sockets, that majestic face
Its wonted features lost, and blood with fire
Ran down her head in intermingled streams,
While from her bones the flesh, like weeping pitch,
Melted away, thro' the consuming power
Of those unseen enchantments; 'twas a sight
Most horrible: all fear'd to touch the corse,
For her disastrous end had taught us caution.
Meanwhile her hapless Sire, who knew not aught
Of this calamity, as he with haste
Enter'd the palace, stumbled o'er her body;
Instantly shrieking out, then with his arms
Infolded, kiss'd it oft, and, "O my child,
"My wretched child," exclaim'd; "what envious God,
"Author of thy dishonourable fall,
"Of thee bereaves an old decrepid man
"Whom the grave claims? with thee I wish to die,
"My Daughter." Scarcely had the hoary Father
These lamentations ended; to uplift
His feeble body striving, he adher'd
(As ivy with its pliant tendrils clings
Around the laurel) to the tissued vest.
Dire was the conflict; he to raise his knee
From earth attempted, but his Daughter's corse
Still held him down, or if with greater force
He dragg'd it onward, from his bones he tore
The aged flesh: at length he sunk, and breath'd
In agonizing pangs his soul away:
For he against such evil could bear up
No longer. To each other close in death
The Daughter and her Father lie: their fate
Demands our tears. Warn'd by my words, with haste
From this domain convey thyself, or vengeance
Will overtake thee for this impious deed.
Not now for the first time do I esteem
Human affairs a shadow: without fear
Can I pronounce, they who appear endued

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With wisdom, and most plausibly trick out
Specious harangues, deserve to be accounted
The worst of fools. The man completely blest
Exists not. Some in overflowing wealth
May be more fortunate, but none are happy.

CHORUS.

Heaven its collected store of evils seems
This day resolv'd with justice to pour down
On perjur'd Jason. Thy untimely fate
How do we pity, O thou wretched Daughter
Of Creon, who in Pluto's mansions go'st
To celebrate thy nuptial feast.

MEDEA.

My friends,
I am resolv'd, as soon as I have slain
My Children, from these regions to depart,
Nor thro' inglorious sloth will I abandon
My Sons to perish by detested hands;
(24) They certainly must die: since then they must,
I bore and I will slay them. O my heart!
Be arm'd with tenfold firmness. What avails it
To loiter, when inevitable ills
Remain to be accomplish'd? take the sword,
And, O my hand, on to the goal that ends
Their life, nor let one intervening thought
Of pity or maternal tenderness
Suspend thy purpose: for this one short day
Forget how fondly thou didst love thy Sons,
How bring them forth, and after that lament
Their cruel fate: altho' thou art resolv'd
To slay, yet hast thou ever held them dear.
But I am of all women the most wretched.

[*Exit* MEDEA.

(24) The repetition of the two verses,

Παιδες σφ' αναγκη κατθανειν· κατα δε χρη,
Ημας κτανειν, οστις εξεφυσαμην

which have already occurred in a former speech of Medea, is noticed

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CHORUS.

ODE.

I.

(25) Earth, and thou Sun, whose fervid blaze
From pole to pole illumes each distant land,
View this abandon'd woman, ere she raise
Against her Children's lives a ruthless hand;
For from thy race, divinely bright,
They spring, and should the sons of Gods be slain
By man, 'twere dreadful. O restrain
Her fury, thou celestial source of light,
Ere she with blood pollute your regal dome,
Chas'd by the Demons hence let this Erinnys roam.

II.

The pregnant matron's throes in vain
Hast thou endur'd, and borne a lovely race,
O thou, who o'er th' inhospitable main
Where the Cyanean rocks scarce leave a space,
Thy daring voyage didst pursue.
Why, O thou wretch, thy soul doth anger rend,
Such as in murder soon must end?
They who with kindred gore are stain'd, shall rue
Their guilt inexpiable: full well I know
The Gods will on this house inflict severest woe.

both by Barnes and Carmelli, who do not propose the removal of them from either place: and I am induced to consider them as my safest guides, later critics being pretty equally divided in their opinions, for Pierson and Dr. Musgrave would take them away at v. 1063, and Valkenaer and Brunck object to them here.

(25) "When the Chorus saw that Medea (absolutely determined on "slaying her Children) rush'd forth to perpetrate her intention, and that "it would be impracticable for them to prevent her laying violent hands "on them, which could be effected only by the interposition of Heaven, "they address their prayers to the Gods, imploring them to hinder so "execrable a crime: the Sun they invoke as the ancestor of Medea, and "because nothing escapes his notice; and Earth, because it is on "the point of being polluted with the blood of the Children." SCHOLIAST.

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1st SON *(within.)*

(26) Ah me! what can I do, or whither fly
To scape a Mother's arm?

2d SON *(within.)*

I cannot tell:
For, O my dearest Brother, we are lost.

CHORUS.

Heard you the Children's shrieks? I (O thou Dame
Whom woes and evil fortune still attend)
Will rush into the regal dome, from death
Resolv'd to snatch thy Sons,

1st SON *(within.)*

We by the Gods
Conjure you to protect us in this hour
Of utmost peril, for the treacherous snare
Hath caught us, and we perish by the sword.

CHORUS.

Art thou a rock, O wretch, or steel, to slay
With thine own hand that generous race of Sons
Whom thou didst bear? I hitherto have heard
But of one woman, who in antient days
Smote her dear Children, (27) Ino, by the Gods
With frenzy stung, when Jove's malignant Queen
Distracted from her mansion drove her forth.

(26) Pausanias and Apollodorus inform us, that the name of these two Sons of Jason and Medea were Mermerus and Pheres.

(27) The reader will find among the fragments of our Author several valuable remains of the Tragedy entitled Ino, and from that of the Bacchanalians may collect that Ino was one of the Daughters of Cadmus, and partook with her Sisters Agave and Autonoe in their orgies on Mount Cithæron and the murder of Pentheus; the subsequent accounts given of her by Apollodorus and Ovid, which somewhat vary from this of Euripides, are, that both she and her husband Athamas were seized with a frenzy inflicted by Juno, under the influence of which Athamas taking his elder Son Learchus for a wild beast, dash'd him against a wall, and Ino threw herself, with Melicerta her younger Son, from a rock into the ocean, where they became Sea Gods; she by the name of Leucothea, and he by that of Palæmon, as Euripides also mentions in his Iphigenia in Tauris, v. 270, 271. ed. Barnes.

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But she, yet reeking with the impious gore
Of her own progeny, into the waves
Plung'd headlong from the ocean's craggy beach,
And shar'd with her two Sons one common fate.
Can there be deeds more horrible than these
Left for succeeding ages to produce?
Disastrous union with the female sex,
How great a source of woes art thou to man!

JASON, CHORUS.

JASON.

Ye Dames who near the portals stand; is she
Who hath committed these atrocious crimes,
Medea, in the palace, or by flight
Hath she retreated? for beneath the ground
Must she conceal herself, or borne on wings
Ascend the heights of Ether, to avoid
The vengeance due for Corinth's royal house,
Having destroy'd the rulers of the land,
Can she presume she shall escape unhurt
From these abodes? but less am I concern'd
On her account, than for my sons: since they
Whom she hath injur'd, will on her inflict
Due punishment: but hither am I come
To save my Children's lives, lest on their heads
The noble Creon's kindred should retaliate
That impious murder by their Mother wrought.

CHORUS.

Thou know'st not yet, O thou unhappy man,
What ills thou art involv'd in, or these words
Had not escap'd thee.

JASON.

Ha, what ills are these
Thou speak'st of? Would she also murder me?

CHORUS.

By their own Mother's hand thy Sons are slain.

JASON.

What can you mean? how utterly, O Woman,

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Have you undone me!

CHORUS.

Be assur'd thy Children
Are now no more.

JASON.

Where was it, or within
Those mansions or without, that she destroy'd
Our progeny?

CHORUS.

As soon as thou these doors
Hast op'd, their weltering corses wilt thou view.

JASON.

Loose the firm bars and bolts of yonder gates
With speed, ye servants, that I may behold
This scene of twofold misery, the remains
Of the deceas'd, and punish her who slew them.

MEDEA, IN A CHARIOT DRAWN BY DRAGONS, JASON, CHORUS.

MEDEA.

With levers, wherefore dost thou shake those doors
In quest of them who are no more, and me
Who dar'd to perpetrate the bloody deed?
Desist from such unprofitable toil:
But if there yet be aught that thou with me
Canst want, speak freely whatsoe'er thou wilt:
For with that hand me never shalt thou reach,
Such steeds the Sun my Grandsire gives, to whirl
This chariot, and protect me from my foes.

JASON.

O most abandon'd Woman, by the Gods,
By me and all the human race abhorr'd,
Who with the sword could pierce the Sons you bore,
And ruin me a childless wretched man,
Yet after you this impious deed have dar'd
To perpetrate, still view the radiant Sun
And fostering Earth; may vengeance overtake you!

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For I that reason have regain'd which erst
Forsook me, when to the abodes of Greece
I from your home, from a Barbarian realm
Convey'd you, to your Sire a grievous bane,
And the corrupt betrayer of that land
Which nurtur'd you. Some envious God first rous'd
Your evil genius from the shades of hell
For my undoing: after you had slain
Your Brother at the (28) altar, you embark'd
In the fam'd Argo. Deeds like these a life
Of guilt commenc'd; with me in wedlock join'd,
You bore those Sons, whom you have now destroy'd
Because I left your bed. No Grecian dame
Woul'd e'er have ventur'd on a deed so impious;
Yet I to them preferr'd you for my Bride:
This was an hostile union, and to me
The most destructive; for my arms receiv'd
No woman, but a lioness more fell
Than Tuscan Scylla. Vainly should I strive
To wound you with reproaches numberless,
For you are grown insensible of shame!
Vile sorceress, and polluted with the blood
Of your own Children, perish: my hard fate,
While I lament, for I shall ne'er enjoy
My lovely Bride, nor with those Sons who owe
To me their birth and nurture, ever hold
Sweet converse: they, alas, can live no more,
Utterly lost to their desponding Sire.

MEDEA.

Much could I say in answer to this charge,

(28) The expression Παρεστιον, which Barnes and some of the older versions translate quocum simul educata es, is in the notes of Carmelli, and by Dr. Musgrave, rendered, juxta focum, conformably to the interpretation of the Scholiast, who refers us to Apollonius Rhodius, in whose Argonautics, L. 4, v. 470, &c. we meet with the account of Absyrtes, the Brother of Medea, being murdered by Jason in the presence of his Sister, before the altar of Diana: the poet says, that Medea veil'd her face, but Erinnys was a spectator of the horrid deed.

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Were not the benefits from me received,
And thy abhorr'd ingratitude, well known
To Jove, dread Sire. Yet was it not ordain'd,
Scorning my bed, that thou should'st lead a life
Of fond delight, and ridicule my griefs;
Nor that the royal virgin thou didst wed,
Or Creon, who to thee his Daughter gave,
Should drive me from these regions unaveng'd.
A lioness then call me if thou wilt,
Or by the name of Scylla, whose abode
Was in Etrurian caverns. For thy heart,
As justice prompted, in my turn I wounded.

JASON.

You grieve, and are the partner of my woes.

MEDEA.

Be well assur'd I am: but what assuages
My grief is this, that thou no more canst scoff.

JASON.

How vile a Mother, O my Sons, was yours!

MEDEA.

How did ye perish thro' your Father's lust!

JASON.

But my right hand was guiltless of their death.

MEDEA.

Not so thy cruel taunts, and that new marriage.

JASON.

Was my new marriage a sufficient cause
For thee to murder them?

MEDEA.

Canst thou suppose
Such wrongs sit light upon the female breast?

JASON.

On a chaste woman's; but your soul abounds
With wickedness.

MEDEA.

Thy sons are now no more,
This will afflict thee.

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JASON.

O'er your head, alas!
They now two evil Geniuses impend.

MEDEA.

The Gods know who these ruthless deeds began.

JASON.

They know the hateful temper of your soul.

MEDEA.

In detestation thee I hold, and loathe
Thy conversation.

JASON.

Yours too I abhor;
But we with ease may settle on what terms
To part for ever.

MEDEA.

Name those terms. Say how
Shall I proceed? for such my ardent wish.

JASON.

Let me inter the dead, and o'er them weep.

MEDEA.

Thou shalt not: for their corses with this hand
Am I resolv'd to bury, in the grove
Sacred to aweful Juno, who protects
The citadel of Corinth, lest their foes
Insult them, and with impious rage pluck up
The monumental stone. I in this realm
Of Sisyphus moreover will ordain,
A solemn festival and mystic rites,
To make a due atonement for my guilt,
In having slain them. To Erectheus' land
I now am on my road, where I shall dwell
With Ægeus, great Pandion's Son: but thou
Shalt vilely perish as thy crimes deserve,
Beneath the shatter'd relics of thy bark
(29) The Argo, crush'd; such is the bitter end

(29) Various are the accounts given of Jason's death. The Scholiast on this passage says, that "through the wrath or command of Medea,

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Of our espousals, and thy faith betray'd.

JASON.

May the Erinnys of our slaughter'd Sons,
And Justice, who requites each murderous deed,
Destroy you utterly!

MEDEA.

Will any God
Or Demon hear thy curses, O thou wretch,
False to thy oath, and to the sacred laws
Of hospitality?

JASON.

Most impious woman,
Those hands yet reeking with your Children's gore—

"Jason sleeping beneath the prow of the ship Argo, perished by its falling "upon him." But Diodorus Siculus, after having related the deaths of Creon, and Glaucè his Daughter, in much the same manner with our author, gives an account of what passed afterwards, in several respects totally irreconcileable with Euripides; "Jason had three Sons by Medea, "Thessalus, Alcimenes, and Tisander; the first of them escaped his "mother's fury; but the two latter were slain by her hands, and buried "by her in the temple of Juno: after committing these murders, Medea "fled for refuge to Hercules, who had been witness of Jason's plighting "his troth to her at Colchos, but finding him in a state incapable of af-"fording her any protection, she went from Thebes to Athens, where "she married Ægeus, but being driven from thence by Theseus, that "king's son by a former wife, she found another royal Husband, whose "name is not mentioned, in Asia, and bore him a Son called Medus, "from whom the nation called the Medes derive their name. Jason, "bereft, by Medea's vengeance, of his Children, and of his Bride the "Corinthian Princess, was universally thought to have suffered accord-"ing to his deserts; and therefore being unable any longer to bear up "under the weight of such accumulated misfortunes, put an end to his "own life." But upon examining Dr. Blair's Chronological Tables, I am rather induced to think with Euripides, that these events were prior to the births either of Theseus or Hercules. By the verses of Neophron, cited in the chapter of Nic. Loensis on this subject, referred to by Barnes, which is to be met with in the Lampas, or Fax artium of Gruter, Suppl. T 5. p. 430, we are given to understand that Jason perished in a manner very unworthy of the Hero, by hanging himself. Exitu diro temerata ponti jura piavit, will however, in every point of view, become applicable to him, equally at least with the rest of his comrades enumerated by Seneca in that very animated Ode which closes his third act of Medea.

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MEDEA.

Go to the palace, and inter thy Bride.

JASON.

Bereft of both my Sons, I thither go.

MEDEA.

Not yet enough lament'st thou: to encrease
Thy sorrows, may'st thou live till thou art old!

JASON.

Ye dearest Children.

MEDEA.

To their Mother dear,
But not to thee.

JASON.

Yet them have you destroy'd.

MEDEA.

That I might punish thee.

JASON.

One more fond kiss
On their lov'd lips, ah me, would I imprint.

MEDEA.

Now would'st thou speak to them, and in thine arms
Clasp those whom living thou didst banish hence.

JASON.

Allow me, I conjure you by the Gods,
My Children's tender bodies to embrace.

MEDEA.

Thou shalt not: these presumptuous words in vain
By thee were hazarded.

JASON.

Jove, hear'st thou this,
How I with scorn am driven away, how wrong'd
By that detested lioness, whose fangs
Have slain her Children? yet shall my loud plaints,
While here I fix my seat, if 'tis allow'd,
And this be possible, call down the Gods
To witness that you hinder me from touching
My murder'd Sons, and paying the deceas'd

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Funereal honors; would to Heaven I ne'er
Had seen them born to perish by your hand!

CHORUS.

Thron'd on Olympus, with his sovereign nod,
Jove unexpectedly performs the schemes
Divine foreknowledge plann'd; our firmest hopes
Oft fail us: but the God still finds the means (30)
Of compassing what man could ne'er have look'd for;
And thus doth this important business end.

(30) Fata viam invenient aderitq; vocatus Apollo.
Virgil Æn. L. 3. v. 395.

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HIPPOLYTUS.

Ἡ μὲν σταλείσα δυσκλεὴς οἰήσεῖ βροχοις,
Ἐρῶσα, οὐκ ἐρῶσα, ἀλλ' Ἐριννυων
Πικρὰν ἀποψηλᾶσα κηρυλικον σαγην. LYCOPHRON.

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PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

VENUS.

HIPPOLYTUS.

ATTENDANTS OF HIPPOLYTUS.

OFFICER BELONGING TO THE PALACE.

CHORUS OF TRŒZENIAN DAMES.

NURSE.

PHÆDRA.

THESEUS.

MESSENGERS.

DIANA.

SCENE—BEFORE PITTHEUS' PALACE AT TRŒZENE.

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HIPPOLYTUS.

VENUS.

My empire Man confesses, and the name
Of Venus echoes thro' Heaven's wide expanse.
Among all those who on the distant coast
Of ocean dwell, and earth's remotest bounds
Old Atlas' station who upholds the skies,
Beholding the resplendent solar beams;
On them who to my power due homage pay
Great honours I bestow, and to the dust
Humble each proud contemner. E'en the race
Of happy Deities with pleasure view
The reverence mortals yield them. Of these words
Ere long will I display the truth: that Son
Of Theseus and the (1) Amazonian Dame,
Hippolytus, by holy Pittheus taught,
E'en he alone among all those who dwell
Here in Trœzenè, of th' immortal Powers
Styles me the weakest, loathes the genial bed,

(1) Plutarch says the name of the Amazonian captive whom Theseus married, was, according to some, Antiope, and, according to others, Hippolyta. In Petit. Leg. Att. l. 6. tit. 1. the reader will find a discussion of that law which enjoined the Athenians to take to Wife a citizen, which appears to have undergone several fluctuations, and sometimes to have been enforced with more, and sometimes with less, strictness: nor can we wonder if the children of Phædra, who was the Daughter of Minos king of Crete, and married to their Sovereign, were legitimated by the people of Athens, while the Son of the captive Amazon, especially after the death of his Mother, and second marriage of his Father, found the law made use of against him, in order to bar his succeeding to the throne: but his exclusion is represented by the Nurse, v. 305, as depending on Phædra's life. In the course of this Tragedy, Theseus, v. 962, and Hippolytus himself, v. 1063, lay a great stress on the word νόθος, which signifies one "of spurious birth." I thought this explanation the more requisite, as Carmelli, in his notes, says he does not see why the Poet calls Hippolytus νόθος, and supposes him to mean nothing more than that Phædra was his Mother-in-law.

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Nor to the sacred nuptial yoke will bow:
Apollo's Sister Dian sprung from Jove
He worships, her the greatest he esteems
Of all the Gods, and ever in her groves
A favour'd comrade of the virgin dwells,
With his swift hounds the flying beasts of prey
Expelling from their haunts, and aims at more
Than human nature reaches: him in this
I envy not: why should I? yet shall vengeance
This day o'ertake the miscreant: I have forg'd
Each implement already, and there needs
But little labour to effect his doom.
For erst on his arrival from the house
Of Pittheus, in Pandion's land, to view
The mystic rites, and in those mystic rites
To be initiated; his Father's Wife
Illustrious Phædra saw the Prince, her heart,
At my behest, love's dire contagion seiz'd:
And ere she came to this Trœzenian coast,
She, where Minerva's rock o'erlooks this land,
To Venus rear'd a temple, for the youth
Who in a foreign region dwelt, engross'd
By amorous frenzy, and to future times
Resolv'd this lasting monumental pile
Of her unhappy passion to bequeath.
But from Cecropia's realm since Theseus fled
To expiate his pollution, with the blood
Of (2) Pallas' Sons distain'd, and with his Queen
Sail'd for this coast, to voluntary exile
Submitting for one year, the wretched Phædra
Groaning and deeply smitten by the stings
Of love hath pin'd in silence, nor perceives

(2) "Nisus, Pallas, and Ægeus, were the three Sons of Pandion; "Nisus dwelt at Megara; but Ægeus and Pallas ruled over some de- "tached tribes; Attica not being yet collected into one state. It is "said that Theseus killed one of his first cousins the Sons of Pallas, who "was his competitor for the kingdom." SCHOLIAST.

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One of her menial train, whence this disease
Invaded her, Yet of its full effect
Must not her amorous malady thus fail:
For I to Theseus am resolv'd to shew
The truth, no longer shall it rest conceal'd:
Then will the Father with his curses slay
(3) My youthful foe: for the reward on Theseus
Conferr'd by Neptunè ruler of the waves
Was this; that thrice he to that God might sue
For any gift, nor should he sue in vain.
Phædra is noble, yet she too shall perish,
For I of such importance shall not hold
Her ruin, as to spare those foes, on whom
I the severest vengeance will inflict,
That I may reassert my injur'd fame.
But hence must I retreat: for I behold
Hippolytus this Son of Theseus comes,
Returning from the labours of the chase:
A numerous band of servants, on their Prince
Attending, in the clamorous song unite
To celebrate Diana: for he knows not
That hell hath op'd its gates, and he is doom'd
After this day to view the sun no more.

[*Exit* VENUS.

HIPPOLYTUS, ATTENDANTS.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Come on, my Friends, attune your lays
To resound Diana's praise,
From the radiant fields of air
She listens to her votaries prayer.

ATTENDANTS.

Aweful Queen enthron'd above,
Hail thou progeny of Jove,

(3) We find by Dr. Musgrave, Valkenaer, and Brunck, that the reading of *τοκεων*, which is an evident improvement, is authorised by some of the manuscripts: *ωφειλε* is that of Barnes and the preceding editors.

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Virgin Goddess, whom of yore
Latona to the Thunderer bore,
Thy matchless beauties far outshine
Each of those lovely Maids divine,
Who fill with their harmonious choir
The domes of Heaven's immortal Sire.
Hail, O thou whose charms excell
All Nymphs that on Olympus dwell.

HIPPOLYTUS.

To deck thee, I this wreath, O Goddess, bear,
Cropt from yon mead, o'er which no swain his flock
For pasture drives, nor hath the mower's steel
Despoil'd its virgin herbage, 'midst each flower,
Which spring profusely scatters, there the bee
Roams unmolested, and Religious Awe
Waters the champaign with abundant springs:
They who owe nought to learning, but have gain'd
From nature, wisdom such as never fails
In their whole conduct, are by Heaven allow'd
To cull these sweets, not so the wretch profane.
Vouchsafe, O dearest Goddess, to receive
This braided fillet for thy golden hair
From me a pious votary, who alone
Of all mankind am for thy worship meet,
For I with thee reside, with thee converse,
Hearing thy voice indeed, tho' I thy face
Have never seen. My life as it began
May I with spotless purity conclude!

OFFICER, HIPPOLYTUS.

OFFICER.

My royal Master (for the Gods alone
Challenge the name of (4) Lord), will you receive
A servant's good advice?

(4) The authority of Kings in the Grecian states appears to have been limited to such narrow bounds, that they were in fact little more than Generals of the troops; no wonder therefore the people entertained a

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HIPPOLYTUS.

With joy; else void
Of wisdom I to thee might justly seem.

OFFICER.

Know you the law prescrib'd to man?

HIPPOLYTUS.

The law!
I cannot guess the purport of thy question.

OFFICER.

To loathe that pride which studies not to please.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Right: for what haughty man is not abhorr'd?

OFFICER.

Doth then an affable demeanor tend
To make us popular?

HIPPOLYTUS.

This much avails,
And teaches us with ease to gain renown.

OFFICER.

But think'st thou that among Celestial Powers
It bears an equal influence?

HIPPOLYTUS.

Since the laws

strong jealousy of their assuming such titles as denoted pretensions to arbitrary power. In Seber's Index to Homer, I do not once meet with the word δεσπότης, here rendered "Lord." In the Rhesus of Euripides it twice occurs, and is both times put into the mouths of Barbarians. Henry Stephens, in his Greek Thesaurus, defines it, proprie servi respectu dictus. In the earlier times of the Roman Empire, when some appearance of a regard for freedom was still preserved, Suetonius informs us, that not only Augustus, but his successor Tiberius, rejected with great indignation the title of Lord; and we find by the Misopogon of Julian, that he followed their example at Constantinople in much later times, surrounded as he was by Asiatic slaves inured to the yoke, men to whom the sight of a Philosopher on the throne was so strange, that they ridiculed that moderation in the conduct of their sovereign, which they felt themselves incapable of imitating. Much as the use of words fluctuates, Dr. Johnson's interpretation of Despot, the English derivative from δεσπότης, is, "an absolute Prince, one that governs with unli-
"mited authority."

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By which we mortals act, from Heaven derive
Their origin.

OFFICER.

Why then, an aweful Goddess,
Neglect you to invoke?

HIPPOLYTUS.

Whom? yet beware,
Lest thy tongue utter some imprudent word.

OFFICER.

This Venus who is station'd o'er your gate.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Still chaste I at a distance her salute.

OFFICER.

By mortals deem'd illustrious she exacts
Your worship.

HIPPOLYTUS.

We select this God, that friend,
As suits our various tempers.

OFFICER.

Were you wise,
Wise as you ought, you might be truly happy.

HIPPOLYTUS.

I am not pleas'd with any God whose rites
Demand nocturnal secrecy.

OFFICER.

My Son,
We ought to reverence the immortal Powers.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Entering the palace, O my Friends, prepare
The viands, after a fatiguing chase
Delicious is the banquet: tend my steeds,
That when I have refresh'd myself with food
Them I with more convenience to the car
May yoke, and exercise: but as for this
Thy Cyprian Queen, to her I bid adieu.

[*Exeunt* HIPPOLYTUS *and* ATTENDANTS.

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OFFICER.

Meantime (for the example of young men
Must not be imitated) prompt to think,
And hold such language as a servant ought,
Before thy image I devoutly bend,
O sovereign Venus, thee doth it behove
To pardon the rash boy who flush'd with pride
Speaks foolishly: seem thou as if his words
Had never reach'd thine ear: for sure the Gods
In wisdom should transcend man's groveling race.

[*Exit* OFFICER

CHORUS.

O D E.

I. 1.

A rock supplies, as we are told,
In such abundance the exhaustless rill,
That oft the virgins 'gainst its basis hold
Their copious urns to fill.
One of our associate train
Thither, in the limpid wave,
Went, her purple vests to lave,
Then hung them dripping on a cliff, to drain,
And imbibe the sunny gale:
I from her first caught this tale;

I. 2.

That with sickness faint, alone
In yonder palace on her sleepless bed
Our Queen reclines, she a thin veil hath thrown
Over her beauteous head:
This the third revolving day,
Since o'erpower'd by lingering pains
She from all nourishment abstains,
Wasting that lovely frame with slow decay;
She thus her hidden griefs would end,
Thus to the silent grave descend.

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II. 1.

From some God this impulse springs;
Sure Pan or Hecaté have fir'd thy brain,
Or aweful Cybelé to vex thee brings
Her priests a frantic train;
Perhaps exulting in the chase
Thee (5) Dictynna doth pursue
For neglecting homage due
Her altar with the promis'd cates to grace,
She swiftly glides o'er mountain steep,
Fords the lake or billowy deep.

II. 2.

Have another's witching charms
Seduc'd the Monarch to a stol'n embrace;
Doth then a harlot in thy Theseus' arms
The nuptial couch disgrace?
Or from Cretan shores I ween
Some sailor cross'd the billowy main,
Reach'd this hospitable plain,
And bore a doleful message to the Queen:
Hence with deepest anguish pain'd
In her bed is she detain'd.

III.

Some hidden grief with pregnant throes combin'd,
Oft dwells upon the female mind,
Erst in my entrails rag'd this hidden smart:
Diana that celestial maid,
Amid the pangs of childbirth wont to aid,
I then invok'd, and she whose dart
Pierces the hind, with tutelary care
Descended at her votary's prayer,

(5) The history of the Cretan nymph Britomartis, and her receiving the name of Dictynna, from being caught in a fisherman's net, as she threw herself from a rock into the sea to avoid the pursuit of the amorous Minos, father to Phædra, is illustrated by the Scholiast and Barnes from a variety of authors, particularly Callimachus's hymn to Diana: from whence she appears to have been a follower of that Goddess, with whom she has very frequently been confounded, as by Euripides himself in his Iphigenia in Tauris, v. 127. edit. Barnes.

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And with her brought each friendly Power
Who guards our sex in that distressful hour.

But lo, her aged Nurse, before the gates
Leads out the Queen, over whose downcast brow
Care spreads a deeper cloud: my inmost soul
Burns with impatience to explore the grief
Which preys in secret on her fading charms.

PHÆDRA, NURSE, CHORUS.

NURSE.

Ye wretched mortals, who by loath'd disease
Are visited! what shall I do to aid thee,
Or what shall I omit? the solar beams
Here may'st thou view, here find a cooling air.
For we without the palace doors have borne
The couch where sickening thou reclin'st. Thy talk
Was all of coming hither: but in haste
Back to thy chamber soon wilt thou return:
For thou, each moment altering, tak'st delight
In nothing long; the present quickly grows
Unpleasing, somewhat absent thou esteem'st
More grateful. Better were it to be sick
Than tend the lingering patient; for the first
Is but a simple ill, the last unites
The mind's more pungent griefs and manual toil.
But the whole life of man abounds with woe,
Our labours never cease: yet sure there is,
There is a blest futurity, conceal'd
Behind thick night's impenetrable veil.
We therefore seem mistaken, when we doat
On yonder sun, that o'er this nether earth
Displays its glittering beams, because we know
No other life, nor have the realms beneath
Been e'er laid open: but by tales, devis'd
To cheat, at random are we borne away.

PHÆDRA.

Lift up my body, prop my sinking head,

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Each limb, my friends, has lost its strength; sustain,
O ye who on your wretched mistress tend,
My hands which hang quite motionless: away
With cumbrous ornaments, the cawl remove,
And let these tresses o'er my (6) shoulders flow.

NURSE.

Daughter, be cheerful, and compose to rest
Thy languid frame: thou if with patience arm'd
And generous fortitude of soul, wilt bear
Thy sickness better. For mankind are doom'd
By fate to struggle with a load of ills

PHÆDRA.

How shall I drink at yonder limpid fount
The cooling waters, and 'midst grassy vales
Recline my wearied limbs beneath the shade
Of spreading alders?

NURSE.

What confus'd discourse
Escapes thee? utter not before the crowd
Such words as closely border on distraction.

PHÆDRA.

Lead to yon mount; I tread the piny grove,
Where the staunch hounds along the mazy track
Follow their prey, and lightly bounding seize
The dappled stag: ye Gods, with my shrill voice
What joy to rouse them, while my auburn hair
Floats in the wanton gale, and brandish round
In my firm hand Thessalia's pointed lance.

NURSE.

Whence, O my Child, proceed these anxious cares?
What business with the chase hast thou? why thirst

(6) Had the reading of ωμους, "shoulders," instead of α μοι, "ah me," been any new-fangled device of Valkenaer and Dr. Musgrave, I should not have considered it as sufficiently important to trouble the reader with: but he is here indebted to them for having restored the genuine text as it stood in the edition of Lascaris, which, according to Dr. Musgrave in his note, is authorised by every manuscript.

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For the pure fountain, while a constant spring,
Whose waters thou may'st drink, flows hard beside
The citadel?"

PHÆDRA.

Dread Artemis, thou Goddess
Presiding o'er yon sacred (7) lake, who aid'st
The fleet-hoof'd racer, bear me o'er thy fields
To tame Hennetia's coursers.

NURSE.

Why repeat
These incoherent words? but now to climb
The mountain's lofty summit was thy wish
That thou might'st hunt, then on the sandy beach
To drive thy steeds. O for an abler Seer
Who can expound, what God with iron curb
Subdues my Daughter, and perverts thy soul.

PHÆDRA.

Ah, what have I been doing? wretched me!
From my right senses whither have I wander'd?
Into this frenzy I, alas! am plung'd
By some malignant Demon. Yet once more
Cover my head. The words which I have spoken
Fill me with conscious shame, and many a tear
Streams down my cheeks; I feel the rising blush,
And know not where to turn these eyes. The pang,
When reason reassumes her throne, is great.
Tho' madness be an evil: yet 'tis best
When in that state unconscious we expire.

(7) Some commentators think that λιμνὰν is a proper name, and should be translated *Limna*, where it seems the gymnasium of Trœzene was situated: but Pausanias informs us, that the temple erected to Diana by Saron, an antient king of that country, from whom the Saronian bay derived its name, stood, παλαιὰν, loco palustri. The steeds of Hennetia are again mentioned, v. 1132 of this Tragedy, where they are called, in Rattalaer's version, Paphlagonici; the Hennetians were a colony from that nation who settled on the borders of the Adriatic sea, at the spot where Venice now stands. Homer, in his catalogue of the Trojan allies, mentions Hennetia as celebrated for its breed of mules.

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NURSE.

Thee thus I cover: but ah, when will death
Cover my body? a long life hath taught me
Full many an useful lesson. Friendships form'd
With moderation, for the human race
Are most expedient, and not such as pierce
The marrow of their souls: with the same ease
As they the sacred chords entwine, they ought
To slacken them at will. But for one heart
To suffer twofold anguish, as I grieve
For my unhappy Mistress, is a load
Beyond endurance. 'Tis remark'd, there springs
From all sensations too intense, more pain
Than pleasure, and our health they oft impair.
A foe to all excess, I rather praise
This sentence; "not too much of any thing;"
And in my judgment will the wise concur.

CHORUS.

Thou aged Dame, who hast with stedfast zeal
Attended royal Phædra, we observe
What agonies she suffers, but discern not
The nature of her malady; and wish
By thee to be instructed whence it springs.

NURSE.

I know not; for no answer will she give
To my enquiries.

CHORUS.

Nor the source whence rise
Her sufferings?

NURSE.

Your account and mine agree:
For she on all these points remains still dumb.

CHORUS.

How faint and wasted seems that graceful form!

NURSE.

No wonder: since she tasted any food
This day's the third.

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CHORUS.

By Ate's wrath o'ercome,
Or does she strive to die?

NURSE.

To die she strives,
And by such abstinence her life would end.

CHORUS.

Strange is thy tale: this cannot please her Lord.

NURSE.

From him she hides her sickness, and pretends
To be in health.

CHORUS.

If in her face he look,
Can he not read it?

NURSE.

To a foreign land
From hence, alas, he went, nor yet returns!

CHORUS.

Why art thou not more urgent to explore
This malady, these wanderings of her soul?

NURSE.

Without effect all methods have I tried:
Yet with the self-same zeal will I persist,
That ye may testify the strong attachment
Which I to my unhappy Queen have borne.
O my lov'd Daughter, let us both forget
What we have said: be thou more mild, that gloom
Which overcasts thy brow, those harsh resolves,
Lay thou aside, and if to thee erewhile
I spoke amiss, in milder accents now
Will I express myself; if under pains
Thou labour, such as may not be reveal'd,
To succour thee thy female friends are here?
But if the other sex may know thy sufferings,
Let the Physician try his healing art.
In either case, why silent? it behoves thee,
O Daughter, to reply; and, if I speak

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Unwittingly, reprove me, if aright,
With wholesome admonition O concur.
Say somewhat: cast one look this way. Ah me!
But listen to this truth, tho' more perverse
Than ocean's waves: thy Children, if thou die,
Will be deserted, and can have no share
In the paternal house: for his first Queen,
That martial Amazonian Dame, hath borne
Their Sire a Son to lord it o'er thy race,
Tho' illegitimate, with liberal views
Train'd up from infancy, him well thou know'st,
Hippolytus.

PHÆDRA.

Ah me!

NURSE.

Doth then that name.
Affect thee?

PHÆDRA.

You have ruin'd me; peace, peace:
Be silent, I conjure you by the Gods,
Speak of that man no more.

NURSE.

With open eyes,
And senses now restor'd, canst thou neglect
Thy Children's interest, nor preserve thy life?

PHÆDRA.

I love my Children: but another storm
Assails me.

NURSE.

O my Daughter, sure thy hands
Are undefil'd with blood?

PHÆDRA.

My hands are pure,
Yet doth pollution harbour in my soul.

NURSE.

Proceeds this mischief from some foe?

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PHÆDRA.

A friend,
An unconsenting friend, alas, destroys me,
Nor do I perish thro' my own consent.

NURSE.

Hath Theseus wrong'd thee?

PHÆDRA.

May I ne'er be found
To have injur'd him!

NURSE.

Then what important cause
Precipitates thy death?

PHÆDRA.

Indulge my error;
For I 'gainst you offend not.

NURSE.

My assent
To such request would be a breach of duty.

PHÆDRA.

What mean you by this violence? why hang
Upon my hand?

NURSE.

In suppliant posture thus,
Thus to thy knees for ever will I cling.

PHÆDRA.

If you, unhappy woman, heard my woes,
You would partake them.

NURSE.

What severer woe
Can possibly befall me than the loss
Of thee, my honor'd mistress? (8) for I see
Thou art resolv'd to perish.

PHÆDRA.

This affair
To me will bring renown.

(8) The word ὦ, with which Phædra's reply usually commences, is here added to the Nurse's speech on the authorities of Valkenaer and Brunck.

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NURSE.

Why then conceal
Those merits into which I wish t' enquire?

PHÆDRA.

Me virtuous motives prompt to deeds of shame.

NURSE.

Reveal those motives, hence shalt thou appear
More noble.

PHÆDRA.

O depart, I by the Gods
Conjure you, and release my hand.

NURSE.

Not thus,
If this request from me thou still withhold.

PHÆDRA.

I will comply; for you my aged suppliant,
Such due respect I entertain.

NURSE.

In silence
Will I attend: now is it thine to speak.

PHÆDRA.

My wretched (9) Mother, what a love was thine?

NURSE.

Why should'st thou name her passion for that Bull?

PHÆDRA.

And you my hapless Sister, Bacchus' Wife—

NURSE.

What ails thee? why dost thou recount the shame
Of these thy kindred?

PHÆDRA.

But of me the third,
How wretched is the fate!

NURSE.

Thou strik'st me dumb.
Where will this history end?

(9) The reader will find the histories of Pasiphaë the Mother, and Ariadne the Sister of Phædra, in most of the mythological writers, particularly Ovid, Metamorphoses, L. 8. v. 131—182.

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PHÆDRA.

Thence spring my woes,
Woes of no recent date.

NURSE.

I understand
As little of the secret I would learn,
As if thou still wert silent.

PHÆDRA.

How should you
Divine my thoughts so as t' anticipate
What I would speak?

NURSE.

No prophetess am I,
These mysteries with precision to unfold.

PHÆDRA.

Say, what is that which men entitle Love?

NURSE.

Love is a mixture form'd of sweetest joys,
And torments most severe.

PHÆDRA.

The last of these
Have I experienc'd.

NURSE.

Daughter, ha, what said'st thou?
For whom thus burn'st thou with forbidden fires?

PHÆDRA.

Who is that Son of th' Amazonian Dame?

NURSE.

Mean'st thou Hippolytus?

PHÆDRA.

By you, not me,
That name was utter'd.

NURSE.

Ah, what words are these?
How hast thou ruin'd me! This, O my friends,
Is not to be endur'd; I cannot live
To bear it: to these eyes the lamp of day

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Grows odious; the incumbrance of this body
Will I cast off, nor on such tenure hold
A being I abhor; and now farewell
For ever; count me dead. Chaste matrons yield
With some reluctance, yet to lawless love
At length they yield. Venus is then no Goddess,
But somewhat more than Goddess: for my Queen
And me, and this whole house, hath she destroy'd.

CHORUS.

STROPHE.

Too clear thou heard'st the royal Dame confess
The horrors which her bosom stain:
O had I died ere this severe distress
Shook reason's seat, and fir'd her frantic brain!
Thy sorrows are by Heaven decreed.
(10) Ye miseries on which mortals feed!
Thy shame lies open to the sun,
And thou, my royal Mistress, art undone.
Short is thy date:
What cruel fate,
Such as with life alone can end,
Shall to the grave thy steps attend!
I see, I see thro' time's deep gloom,
These mansions fall by Venus' doom:
Such revolution is at hand,
Thee, hapless Cretan nymph, the Fates demand.

PHÆDRA.

O ye Trœzenian matrons, who reside
On this extremity of the domains
Where Pelops rul'd; thro' many a wakeful night
Have I consider'd whence mankind became
Thus universally corrupt, and deem

(10) The thought of Πανυ ταφοιλις βροδυς strikingly resembles that of εγενηθη τα δακρυα μου εμοι γ' αρτος ημερας και νυκτος, as it stands in the Septuagint version of the Psalms; and in the English "my tears have been my meat "day and night."

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That to the nature of the human soul,
Our frailties are not owing: for to form
Sound judgments, is a privilege enjoy'd
By many. But the matter in this light
Ought to be view'd; well knowing what is good,
We practise not. Some do amiss thro' sloth,
Others to virtue's rigid laws prefer
Their pleasures; for with various pleasures, life
Is furnish'd; conversation lengthen'd out
Beyond due bounds, ease that bewitching pest,
And shame, of which there are two kinds, one leads
To virtue, by the other is a (11) house
Involv'd in woe; but if the proper season
For our expressing shame were ascertain'd
With due precision, things which bear one name
Could not have differ'd thus. When in my mind
I had revolv'd these thoughts, to me it seem'd
As if no magic had sufficient power
To warp the stedfast purpose of my soul.
Here I to you the progress of my heart
Will next unfold, since Love with his keen shafts
These wounds inflicted; studious how to bear,
As it became me, this abhorr'd disease,
I from that time have by a wary silence
Conceal'd the pangs I suffer. For the tongue
Must not be trusted, well can it suggest
To others wholesome counsels when they err,
Tho' to its owner oft it proves the source
Of grievous ills. I next, this amorous rage
With firmness was determin'd to endure,
And conquer it by chastity. At length,
When all these sage expedients prov'd too weak
O'er Venus to prevail, my best resource
I thought was death: none hath a right to blame

(11) Dr. Musgrave in his note interprets αχθος αικων to mean, that a false shame induces many to live in a style too elegant, and beyond their income.

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These counsels. May my virtues be conspicuous;
But when I act amiss, I would avoid
Too many witnesses. That on such deed,
And e'en the inclination to transgress,
Disgrace attends, I knew, and was aware
That if from honor's paths a woman swerve,
She to the world is odious. On her head
Be tenfold ruin heap'd who first presum'd
To introduce adulterers, and defile
The nuptial couch; from those of nobler birth
Begun this evil thro' our sex to spread.
For when foul deeds please those who erst have borne
A virtuous character, to souls deprav'd
They recommend themselves beneath a form
Of seeming excellence. Those too I hate
Whose words are modest, but their lives impure
In private. O thou Goddess, who didst rise
From Ocean, lovely Venus, how can these
Without a blush, their injur'd Lords behold?
Tremble they not, lest their accomplice darkness,
Or lest the vaulted roofs of their abodes,
Should send forth an indignant voice? this robs
Your Queen of life, my friends: so shall the charge
Of having sham'd my Lord, my Children sham'd,
Be never urg'd against me: free and blest
With liberty of speech, in the fam'd city
Of Athens, they shall dwell, maternal fame
Transmitted for their portion. E'en the man
Of dauntless courage, dwindles to a slave,
If conscious that his Mother or his Sire
Have acted wickedly. One only good,
A just and virtuous soul, the wise affirm,
Strives for pre-eminence with life: for Time,
At length, when like some blooming nymph her charms
Contemplating, he to our eyes holds up
His mirror, every guilty wretch displays.
Among that number may I ne'er be found!

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CHORUS.

Wherever we discern it, O how fair
Is modesty, that source of bright renown!

NURSE.

O Queen, at first, an instantaneous shock,
I, from the history of thy woes, receiv'd:
Now am I sensible my fears were groundless.
But frequently the second thoughts of man (12)
Are more discreet; for there is nothing strange,
Nought, in thy sufferings, foreign to the course
Of nature: thee the Goddess in her rage
Invades. Thou lov'st. And why should this surprize?
Many as well as thee have done the same.
Art thou resolv'd to cast thy life away,
Because thou lov'st? how wretched were the state
Of those who love, and shall hereafter love,
If death must thence ensue! for tho' too strong
To be withstood, when she with all her might
Assails us, Venus gently visits those
Who yield; but if she light on one who soars
With proud and overweening views too high,
As thou may'st well conceive, to utter scorn
Such she exposes; thro' the boundless tracts
Of air she glides, and reigns 'midst ocean's waves:
All things from her their origin derive,
'Tis she that in each breast the genial seeds

(12) "Not with respect to us only, who are born to consume the "fruits of the earth: but Homer's immortal Gods frequently hold the "same language, that their second thoughts ought to improve in wisdom "on their first. Eustathius quotes this proverb of Euripides, which, it "appears from Athenæus, the Tragic Bard has inserted, not only in his "Hippolytus, but also in his Cretan Virgins.—Zenobius and Diogenianus "treating of a proverb, the words of which are different from this verse "of Euripides, though the thought is the same, represent it as deriving "its origin from the sacred rites; in which if the votaries were unable "to appease the Gods by the victims first slain, others, called by the Ro-"mans Succedaneæ, were added to them, till by these means the Gods, "or at least the Priest, became propitious to them. See Aulus Gellius, "and Erasmus on the Adage Posterioribus melioribus." VALKENAER.

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Of potent Love infuses, and from Love
Descends each tribe that fills the peopled earth.
They who with antient writings have convers'd,
And ever dwell among the tuneful Nine (13),
Know how to Theban Semele's embrace
Flew amorous Jove, how bright Aurora stole
Young Cephalus, and plac'd among the Gods
The object of her passion: yet in Heaven
They still reside, where unabash'd they meet
Their kindred Gods; those Gods, because they feel
A sympathetic wound, I deem, indulge
Their weakness: and wilt thou refuse to bear
Like imperfections? Nature on these terms

(13) "These verses of Euripides on the Loves of the Gods, are quoted "by Scaliger in his notes on Propertius, and Bergler on the Clouds of "Aristophanes, v. 1076. The following sentiments exactly tally with "them:

"Ipsa Venus quamvis corrupta libidine Martis,
"Num minus in cælo semper honesta fuit?"

What tho' by Mars that amorous God carest,
Was Venus less rever'd among the blest?

PROPERTIUS, L. 2. El. 23. v. 90.

"The Poet proceeds, v. 111, 112, to explain the ideas of the Nurse "in Euripides.

"Dic mihi quis potuit lectum servare pudicum?
"Quæ Dea cum solo vivere sola Deo?"

Produce one instance of a nuptial bed,
By no successful paramour defil'd:
Of what young Goddess was it ever said,
That on her Lord, and him alone, she smil'd?

"Theseus, in the Hercules Distracted of our author, speaks in the same "strain of the Gods recorded by the Poets: and Racine puts much of "the language of Euripides' Nurse into the mouth of his Oenone, who "expresses herself in these characteristic terms:

"Les Dieux même, les Dieux de l'Olympe habitans,
"Qui d'un bruit si terrible épouvantent les crimes,
"Ont brulé quelquefois des feux illegitimes."

The very Gods who on Olympus' height
Their station hold, and loudly thunder forth
Such dreadful threats 'gainst human sins, have felt
In their own bosoms some unlawful fires. VALKENAER.

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Decreed, thou from thy Father should'st receive
Thy being: look for other Gods, or yield
Submission to these laws. Hast thou observ'd,
How many Husbands, men who are endu'd
With a superior wisdom, when they see
The nuptial bed by secret lust defil'd,
Appear as tho' they saw not: and how oft
The Fathers, if their Sons transgress, connive
At their unhappy passion? To conceal
Unseemly actions, is no trifling part
Of human wisdom; nor should man, his life
Form with too great precision; for the roof,
The covering from the storm, the builder leaves
Less fair, less highly finish'd. If immers'd
In evils great as those thou hast describ'd,
How can'st thou hope to 'scape? but if thy virtues,
Since thou art only human, far exceed
Thy failings, it is well with thee: desist,
O my lov'd daughter, from thy evil purpose,
And cease to utter these reproachful words:
For there is nought but contumelious pride
In thy endeavor to be yet more perfect
Than the immortal Gods: endure thy passion
With fortitude, since 'twas the will divine
That thou should'st love: but give a prosperous turn,
If possible, to thy disease. For songs
There are with magic virtues fraught, and words
Which sooth the soul: hence an effectual cure
May be obtain'd: in such discovery man
Would long in vain be busied, to our sex
If no spontaneous stratagem occur.

CHORUS.

Tho' her advice, amid thy present woes,
O Phædra, be more useful, I applaud
Thy better purpose: yet applause unsought
May haply give offence, and to thine ear
Convey sounds harsher than her specious words.

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PHÆDRA.

'Tis this, e'en this, too plausible a tongue,
Which, states administer'd by wholesome laws,
And houses of the mighty, hath o'erthrown;
Nor should we utter what delights the ear,
But for renown a generous thirst instill.

NURSE.

What means this grave harangue? no need hast thou
Of well-turn'd phrases, but the man thou lov'st.
Look out with speed for those who, in clear terms,
Will to the Prince thy real state unfold.
But had not such calamities assail'd
Thy life, and thou remain'd a virtuous Dame,
I ne'er, to gratify thy wild desires,
Would have entic'd thee to a lawless bed:
But now this great exertion, to preserve
Thy life, is such as envy could not blame.

PHÆDRA.

Detested speech! will you ne'er close that mouth,
And the ungrateful repetition cease
Of words so infamous?

NURSE.

What I propos'd,
Tho' culpable it be, far better suits
Thy interests than severer virtue's rules;
For indiscretion, if it save thy life,
Hath far more merit, than that empty name
Thy pride would make thee perish to retain.

PHÆDRA.

I by the Gods conjure you to desist,
(For you, in terms too plausible, express
Things that are infamous) nor in this strain
Attempt to prove that yielding up my soul
To love, I shall act right: for if you paint
Foul deeds with specious colours, in the snares
From which I now am 'scaping, I afresh
Shall be entangled.

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NURSE.

Hadst thou earlier form'd
These rigid notions, thou should'st ne'er have err'd.
But since this cannot be, my counsel hear:
From thee this second favor I request;
I in my house have philtres to assuage
The pangs of love (which but just now occurr'd
To my remembrance); these, nor to disgrace
Exposing thee, nor of such strong effect
As to impair thy reason, yet will work
On this thy malady a perfect cure,
Unless thro' mere perverseness thou refuse
To make th' experiment: for we from him
Thou lov'st, must either take a sign, a word,
Or fragment of his robe, to join two hearts
In mutual (14) love.

PHÆDRA.

But is this wondrous medicine,
You recommend, an ointment or a potion?

NURSE.

I cannot tell. Search for a cure, my child,
And not instruction.

PHÆDRA.

Greatly do I fear
Your wisdom will be carried to excess.

NURSE.

Know then thou art dispos'd to be alarmed

(14) Different constructions are given to this passage by Brumoy in his Theatre des Grecs, and Mons. Dupuy Acad. Inscriptions, T. 41. p. 446—450; but the word θελκτρα "soothing" occurs both here and in the Nurse's first speech to Phædra, after she had declared her resolution to die; nor does it appear, by the whole tenor of the dialogue, that the method by which she proposes to *heal the torment or disease arising from Phædra's unhappy passion*, is by making use of such a philtre as counteracts Love, and inspires an utter aversion, but that she is all the while giving her hopes of conciliating the affections of Hippolytus, though she now expresses herself in more obscure and disguised terms, to avoid shocking her Queen, already alarmed by her preceding speeches. Instead of λογον "a word," Reiskius, Valkenaer, and Brunck, think we ought to read πλοκον, "a lock of hair."

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At every thing. But whence arise these terrors?

PHÆDRA.

Aught that hath pass'd, lest you to Theseus' Son
Should mention.

NURSE.

Peace, O Daughter, be it mine
To manage this aright: I only sue,
Benignant Goddess, sprung from ocean's waves,
That thou, O Venus, would'st my projects aid.
But to our friends within, will it suffice
The rest of my intentions to unfold.

[*Exit* NURSE.

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. 1.

O Love, whose sweet delusions fly,
Instilling passion thro' the eye,
And steal upon the heart,
Never thus my soul engage,
Come not with immoderate rage,
Nor choose thy keenest dart:
Not the lightning's aweful glare,
Not the thunderbolts of Jove,
Such destructive terrors bear,
As strongly vibrate in the shafts of Love.

I. 2.

On Alpheus' banks in vain, in vain,
Or at Apollo's Delphic fane,
Whole herds of slaughter'd kine
Doth Greece present, if we neglect
Venus' Son, who claims respect,
The genial couch his shrine:
With the vengeance of a foe,
If the Deity invades,
On man, he pours forth every woe,
And crowds with victims all the Stygian shades.

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II. 1.

By Venus, was (15) Oechalia's maid,
Of Hymeneal bonds afraid,
Consign'd in days of yore,
Like a wild filly to the yoke,
Espous'd 'midst horrid slaughter, smoke,
And rites profan'd with gore;
Indignant was the virgin led,
Streaming with dishevel'd hair,
To the stern Alcides' bed,
While bridal shouts were mingled with despair.

II. 2.

Unite, thou sacred Theban wall,
And fountain fam'd from Dirce's fall,
To witness with what might
Resistless Cytherea came,
Brandishing ethereal flame;
To everlasting night,
She, beauteous Semele consign'd,
Who to Jove Lyæus bore:
Her breath's a pestilential wind,
Our heads she like the bee still hovers o'er.

PHÆDRA.

Restrain your tongues: we, O my friends, are ruin'd.

(15) Iölè, Daughter of Eurytus king of Oechalia, after having been promised by her Father, as Apollodorus informs us, to be given in marriage to the man who should excel him and his Sons in archery, was by them unjustly withheld from Hercules, who had given sufficient proofs of his superiority in the use of the bow, a weapon for which he was particularly renowned; upon which the enraged Hero took the city by assault, and, having slain her Father and Brothers, bore off the Princess in triumph. The antient Geographers say, there were several towns of the name of Oechalia; but although this city of Eurytus has had the honor of being twice mentioned, and expressly marked out, as such, by Homer in his catalogue of the Grecian forces, where he speaks of it with Tricca and Ithomé, which were in Thessaly, and receives from Virgil the epithet of egregia; Strabo, and all subsequent writers, seem totally unable to ascertain its situation with any degree of precision.

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CHORUS.

O Phædra, say what terrible event
In thy abode hath happen'd?

PHÆDRA.

Not a word
Must now be utter'd: I would hear these sounds
Which issue from the palace.

CHORUS.

We are silent:
Yet must this prelude sure denote some ill.

PHÆDRA.

Wretch that I am! how dreadful are my woes!

CHORUS

What shrieks, alas, are these, what clamorous sounds
By thee now utter'd? speak, my hapless Queen,
What sudden rumor terrifies thy soul?

PHÆDRA.

We are undone, but stand ye at these doors
And listen to the uproar rais'd within.

CHORUS.

Thou to those portals art already close,
And in the voice which issues from the palace
Hast a great interest, therefore say what ill
Hath happen'd.

PHÆDRA.

Stern Hippolytus, the Son
Of that intrepid Amazonian Dame,
In loudest tone full many a horrid curse
Is uttering 'gainst my servant.

CHORUS.

A mere noise
Is all I hear, yet cannot I collect
A single word distinctly: passing thro'
These doors, their sound hath surely reach'd thine ear.

PHÆDRA.

He plainly calls her, harbinger of vice,
And the betrayer of her Sovereign's bed.

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CHORUS.

Wretch that I am! thou, O my dearest Queen,
Hast been betray'd. What counsel can I give?
The mystery is laid open, thou art ruin'd,
Utterly ruin'd.

PHÆDRA.

Ah!

CHORUS.

Thy friends have prov'd
Unfaithful to their trust

PHÆDRA.

To her I owe
My ruin, who, tho' prompted by her love,
Unwisely, my calamity disclos'd,
Hoping the desperate malady to heal.

CHORUS.

What part, alas! remains for thee to act,
Surrounded by inevitable mischiefs?

PHÆDRA.

But one expedient for my present ills
I know; their only cure is instant death.

HIPPOLYTUS, NURSE, PHÆDRA, CHORUS.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Earth, Mother of us all, and Sun, whose beams
Diffuse their splendor wide, what words unfit
For any tongue to utter, reach'd these ears!

NURSE.

Peace, O my Son, lest some one hear thy voice

HIPPOLYTUS.

I cannot bury such atrocious crimes
As these in silence.

NURSE.

By that fair right hand,
Thee I implore.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Profane not by your touch,
My garment.

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NURSE.

Groveling at thy knees, I crave
Thou would'st not ruin me.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Why wish to check
My tongue, if you, as you pretend, have said
Nought that is blameable?

NURSE.

Yet must my words
On no account be publish'd

HIPPOLYTUS.

To the world
What's virtuous may with honor be reveal'd.

NURSE.

Forget not thus the reverence, O my Son,
Due to a solemn oath.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Altho' my tongue (16)

(16) "This sentence of Euripides hath had various judgements passed "on it; being attacked by his fellow-citizens, and held in contempt by "posterity: yet Cicero, whose single authority is equal to all the rest, "bestows some degree of praise on it, and writes 'quod ita juratum "est, ut mens conciperet fieri oportere id servandum est: quod aliter, "si non feceris, nullum est perjurium.' By 'quod aliter,' he evidently "means oaths extorted by violence, and the words of Euripides may be "commended if made use of by a man who refuses to fulfil what rob-"bers had forced him to swear: but should any one ask whether this "sentiment becomes his Hippolytus, I consider it as extremely unwor-"thy of him, nor does Cicero seem capable of having denied this. "Hippolytus had engaged himself by an oath to the Nurse, that he "would keep secret whatever she confided to him: on hearing the wick-"edness of his Mother-in-law, which he detested, he might blame his "rashness; but his soul, which comprehended the nature of the obligation "under which he had voluntarily laid himself, could by no means be at "liberty to break it; but after advancing this sentiment on the stage, he "acts so inconsistently with his own words, that he rather submits to be "assaulted with the most atrocious calumnies, than in any respect to "violate the faith his tongue had sworn to observe: moreover on this tie "of religion, by which the pious youth held himself bound, depends the "whole Drama." VALKENAER.

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Hath sworn, my soul is from the compact free.

NURSE.

O thou rash youth, what meanst thou? art thou bent
On the destruction of thy friends?

HIPPOLYTUS.

I hold
The friendships of the wicked in abhorrence.

NURSE.

Forgive me: error is the lot of man.

HIPPOLYTUS.

By a fair semblance to deceive the world,
Wherefore, O Jove, beneath the solar beams
That evil, Woman, didst thou cause to dwell?
For if it was thy will the human race
Should multiply, this ought not by such means
To be effected: better in thy fane
Each votary, on presenting brass or steel,
Or massive ingots of resplendent gold;
Proportion'd to his offering, might from thee,
Obtain a race of Sons, and under roofs
Which genuine freedom visits, unannoy'd
By women live. But to receive this worst
Of evils, now no sooner are our doors
Thrown open, than the riches of our house
We utterly exhaust. How great a pest
Is woman, this one circumstance displays;
The very Father who begot and nurtur'd,
A plenteous dower advancing, sends her forth,
That of such loath'd incumbrance he may rid
His mansions: but the hapless youth who takes
This noxious inmate to his bed, exults
While he caparisons a worthless image,
In gorgeous ornaments and tissued vests
Squandering his substance. With some noble race
He who by wedlock a connection forms,
Is bound by hard necessity to keep
The loathsome Consort; if perchance he gain

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One who is virtuous sprung from worthless Sires,
He by the good compensates for the ills
Attending such an union. Happier he,
Unvex'd by these embarrassments, whose Bride
Inactive thro' simplicity, and mild,
To his abode is like a statue fix'd.
All female wisdom doth my soul abhor.
Never may the aspiring Dame, who grasps
At knowing more than to her sex belongs,
Enter my house: for in the subtle breast
Are deeper stratagems by Venus sown:
But she whose reason is too weak to frame
A plot, from amorous frailties lives secure.
No female servant ever should attend
The married Dame, she rather ought to dwell
Among wild beasts, who are by nature mute,
Lest she should speak to any, or receive
Their answers. But the wicked now devise
Mischief in secret chambers, while abroad
Their confidants promote it: thus vile wretch,
In privacy you came, with me to form
An impious treaty for surrendering up
My royal Father's unpolluted bed.
Soon from such horrors in the limpid spring
My ears will I make pure: how could I rush
Into the crime itself, when having heard
Only the name made mention of, I feel
As tho' I some defilement thence had caught?
Base woman, know 'tis my religion saves
Your forfeit life, for by a solemn oath,
If to the Gods I had not unawares
Engag'd myself, I ne'er would have refrain'd
From stating these transactions to my Sire;
But now while Theseus in a foreign land
Continues, hence will I depart, and keep
The strictest silence. But I soon shall see,
When with my injur'd Father I return,

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How you and your perfidious Queen will dare
To meet his eyes, then fully shall I know
Your impudence, of which I now have made
This first essay. Perdition seize you both:
For with unsatiated abhorrence, still
'Gainst woman will I speak, tho' some object
To my repeating always the same charge:
For they are ever uniformly wicked:
Let any one then prove the female sex
Possest of chastity, or suffer me,
As heretofore, against them to inveigh.

[*Exit* HIPPOLYTUS.

CHORUS.

ANTISTROPHE.

O wretched woman's inauspicious fate!
What arts, what projects can we find,
To extricate ourselves, ere yet too late,
From our distress, or how the snare unbind?

PHÆDRA.

Just are the sufferings I endure:
Thou Earth and Sun, my anguish cure.
How, O my friends, shall I avoid
The stroke of fate before I am destroy'd?
Or how conceal
The pangs I feel?
What tutelary God is near,
What friendly mortal will appear
To aid me in this hour of shame?
Afflictions and an evil name
The remnant of my life must vex:
I now am the most wretched of my sex.

CHORUS.

Alas! all now is over; O my Queen,
The stratagems thy hapless servant fram'd
Fail of success, and desperate are thy fortunes.

PHÆDRA.

O villainous destroyer of your friends,

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How have you ruin'd me! may Jove my Grandsire
Uproot you in his vengeance from the earth,
And smite with thunderbolts that perjur'd head.
When I your baleful stratagems foresaw,
How oft did I enjoin you to conceal
That fatal truth, from whose discovery spring
The torments I endure: but you the secret
Contain'd not, hence with an unspotted fame
I cannot die, but some fresh scheme must forge.
For this rash Youth, his soul with anger fir'd,
Will to his Father my offence relate,
(17) Inform the aged Pittheus of my woes,
And with this history, to my foul reproach,
Fill the whole world. May just perdition seize
Both you and all who by dishonest means
Their unconsenting friends are prompt to aid.

NURSE.

Thou, O my royal mistress, may'st condemn
The fault I have committed: for thy griefs
Are so severe, that they awhile o'ercome
Thy better judgement. But would'st thou admit
My answer, I could make one; thee I nurtur'd,
And in thy happiness an interest feel.
But searching for a medicine to remove
Thy sickness, what I least could wish, I found.
Success had stamp'd me wise: for by events
Are our opinions influenc'd.

PHÆDRA.

Is it just,
And satisfactory, thus first to wound,
And then dispute with me?

NURSE.

We dwell too long

(17) Brunck considers this line as an interpolation, and has thrown it out of his edition, on account of the manuscript he consulted in the royal library at Paris not containing it. Valkenaer also marks it out as deficient in two manuscripts.

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On this unhappy subject: I confess
My folly: but, O Daughter, there are means
To extricate thee still from all thy woes.

PHÆDRA.

End this harangue; you counsel'd me amiss
At first, and undertook a vile design.
Go mind your own affairs: be mine the task,
What interests me, to settle as I ought. [*Exit* NURSE.
But, O my noble friends, Trœzenian dames,
Thus far indulgent to my earnest prayer,
In silence bury what you here have heard.

CHORUS.

I call Diana, venerable Daughter
Of Jove, to witness, I will ne'er reveal
Aught of thy sorrows.

PHÆDRA.

Ye have spoken well.
But after weighing all things in my mind,
I one expedient have at length devis'd
In this calamity, which may secure
To my lov'd Sons an honourable life;
And to myself, encompas'd by such woes
As now befall me, some relief afford.
For I will never scandalize the house
Of Crete, nor come, after so base a deed,
Into the presence of offended Theseus,
To save one single life.

CHORUS.

Art thou then bent
On mischief such as cannot be recall'd?

PHÆDRA.

To die is my resolve: but by what means
I must deliberate.

CHORUS.

More auspicious words
Than these I crave.

PHÆDRA.

All I from you expect

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Is wholesome counsel. For the Cyprian Queen
To whom I owe my ruin, I this day
Shall gratify, thus yielding up my life
Vanquish'd by ruthless Love. But after death
I to another shall become a curse;
Hence shall he learn no longer to exult
In my disastrous fortunes, but acquire
Discretion, while my anguish he partakes.

[*Exit* PHÆDRA.

CHORUS.

O D E.

I. 1.

To where yon rock o'erhangs the main,
Waft me, ye Gods, thence bid me spring,
Transform'd into a bird, on vigorous wing
Thro' trackless ether mid the feather'd train:
With rapid pinions would I soar
On high above the Adriatic shore,
And Po's impetuous stream,
(18) Fixt on whose banks that virgin choir,
Who spring from an immortal Sire,
Intent on the same dolorous theme
Still weep for Phaeton's untimely end,
While 'midst the purple tide their amber tears descend.

II. 2.

On to those coasts would I proceed
Where the Hesperides their song
Attune; no mariner can thence prolong
The voyage, for, his daring bark t' impede,
Neptune those hallow'd bounds maintains,
Where Atlas with unwearied toil sustains

(18) Ovid, in the second Book of his Metamorphoses, v. 340—366, has given an account of the Daughters of Apollo and Clymene, and Sisters of Phaeton, (Phaethusa, Lampetia, and a third, whose name he has not transmitted to us) being transformed into Poplars, on the banks of the river Eridanus, or Po, in Italy, where their Brother perished; and of their tears being hardened by the Sun into amber.

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The Heavens' incumbent load;
And from a never-failing spring
Ambrosia's streams their tribute bring,
Watering those chambers, Jove's abode:
There the glad soil its choicest gifts supplies
Obedient to the reign of happy Deities.

II. 1.

Across yon hoarse resounding main,
O bark of Crete, those hastier gales
Which caught the snowy canvas of thy sails,
Convey'd my Mistress, but convey'd in vain;
By fate from prosperous mansions torn,
To nuptial rites unhallow'd was she borne,
And scenes of future shame:
For surely from her native land,
To the renown'd Athenian strand,
She with a luckless omen came;
Tho', to the shore their twisted cables bound,
With joy the sailors leap'd on fair Munychia's ground.

II. 2.

Her strength in lingering sickness spent,
Hence is she ordain'd to prove
How great the tortures of unlawful love,
By the command of angry Venus sent,
And after struggling long in vain,
Defeated by intolerable pain,
Her snowy neck around,
To bind that galling noose, resolves,
Which from her bridal roofs devolves,
Aw'd by the heaven-inflicted wound:
Choosing to perish (19) thus with glory blest,
She, cruel love, expels, the soul's tyrannic pest.

(19) The manner in which the Poet here represents his Heroine as dying to preserve her fame, is, it must be confessed, peculiarly unfortunate. He himself might have been aware of its impropriety, since in his Helen, v. 306, that Princess, deliberating on some mode of putting

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MESSENGER, CHORUS.

MESSENGER.

Ho! ho! all ye who near the palace stand,
With speed come hither; by the fatal cord,
Our Queen, the Wife of Theseus, is destroy'd.

CHORUS.

The deed, alas! is done. My royal Mistress
Suspended in the noose is now no more.

MESSENGER.

Why are ye not more swift? will no one bring
The sharpen'd steel, that, with its aid, this instant
The bandage we may sever from her neck?

SEMICHORUS I.

What shall we do? were it not best, my friends,
To rush into the palace, and our Queen
Loose from the knot which her own hands have tied?

SEMICHORUS II.

But why do the young servants, in this hour

an end to her own life, observes, that "hanging is ignoble even in slaves:" the Rev. Dr. Francklin, indeed, in a note on the Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles, jocularly speaks of it as a death much in fashion among the Antients; but that their ideas were at least equally chaste with those of the moderns in regard to any *unbecoming* method of suicide or of executing criminals, appears from that passage in Homer's Odyssey, where Ulysses, having determined to punish the debauched females of Penelope's court, "by an impure death," immediately caused them to be hanged. The catastrophe of Amata in Virgil is indeed the same with that of our Author's Phædra, but with more propriety expressed by

Nodum *informis* lethi trabe nectit ab altâ.

Then round a beam a running noose she tied,
And fasten'd by the neck obscenely died. DRYDEN.

Seneca, though frequently unhappy in the execution of his Hippolytus, has made a very great improvement on the plan of Euripides, by representing her as living to see the success of her machinations in the death of Hippolytus, and then stabbing herself through remorse. Racine too has undoubtedly altered Phædra's death somewhat for the better, by making her poison herself; but let it be remembered at the same time, that Euripides, instead of following Homer, as Sophocles hath done, in the mode of Jocasta's death, represents her as falling on the sword of one of her Sons.

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Of woe, absent themselves? to be too busy
Is never safe.

MESSENGER.

Extend the hapless body;
Unwelcome office to the lords I serve.

[*Exit* MESSENGER.

CHORUS.

From what I hear, this miserable Dame
Hath left the world: for they are stretching forth
Her corse as one who is already dead.

THESEUS, CHORUS.

THESEUS.

O woman, know ye what loud voice is that
Within the palace? from the menial train
Of damsels, shrieks most grievous reach'd my ear.
None of my household opening wide the gates,
Deign to receive me with auspicious words
On my return from the (20) prophetic shrine.
Hath aught befall'n the venerable Pittheus?
What tho' he be already far advanc'd
Into the vale of years, yet would his death
These mansions with a general sorrow fill.

CHORUS.

Fate in its march, O Theseus, hath not pierc'd
The aged: they who in the bloom of youth
Are now cut off, your sorrows will demand.

THESEUS.

Ah me! hath cruel death then torn away
One of my Sons?

(20) "Theseus is represented by Euripides as returning at this very "moment of time to Trœzene from Delphi, whither he had gone as a "votary of Apollo: for they who either went thither in a public cha- "racter as embassadors from their city, or to consult the God on their "own private affairs, were called Θεωροι; and Theseus, on his returning in "that character, crowned according to antient usage with the sacred "laurel, complains that none of his domestics come forth to meet and "congratulate him on his auspicious return." VALKENAER.

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CHORUS.

They live, while breathless lies
Their Mother; and most piteous was her end.

THESEUS.

What said'st thou? is my dearest Phædra dead?
Thro' what mischance?

CHORUS.

She tied the fatal noose.

THESEUS.

Had grief congeal'd her blood? or was she urg'd
To this by some calamitous event?

CHORUS.

We only know the fact: for to the palace
Am I just come, O Theseus, that with yours
My sorrows I may mingle.

THESEUS.

Round these brows
Why do I wear a garland, but to shew
That I the oracle in luckless hour
Have visited? Unbar those doors, my servants,
Open them wide, that I the wretched corse
Of my dear Wife may view, who by her death
Hath ruin'd me.

(The Palace doors are opened, and the body of PHÆDRA *is discovered with a veil thrown over it.)*

CHORUS.

Thy woes, unhappy Queen,
Were dreadful; yet thou such a deed hast wrought
As in confusion this whole house will plunge:
Presumptuous, violent, unnatural death
By thine own hand inflicted: for, ah! who,
Who but thyself, was author of thy fall?

THESEUS.

Wretch that I am! how many and how great
Are my afflictions! but of all the ills
Which I have felt, this last is most severe.

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Me and these mansions with what terrors arm'd,
O Fortune, dost thou visit! from some Fiend
This unforeseen dishonour takes its rise.
A life like mine is not to be endur'd,
And worse than death itself: for I so vast
An ocean of calamity behold,
That I can never hope to swim to land,
Or stem these overwhelming waves of woe,
Thee how shall I accost, or in what terms
Sufficiently deplore thy wretched fate?
Swift as a bird 'scap'd from the fowler's hand
Hence hast thou vanish'd with impetuous flight
To the domains of sullen Pluto borne.
Grievous, alas! most grievous are these woes.
But from some antient stores of wrath, reserv'd
By vengeful Heaven to punish the misdeeds
Of a progenitor, I sure derive
This great calamity.

CHORUS.

Not you alone
Have such afflictions visited, O King;
You, but in common with a thousand mourners,
Have lost the noble partner of your bed.

THESEUS.

Under earth's deepest caverns would I dwell,
Amid the shades of everlasting night (21),
A wretch best number'd with the silent dead,
Now I, alas! for ever am bereft
Of thy lov'd converse: for thou hast destroy'd
Me rather than thyself. Who will inform me
Whence death, with ruthless destiny combin'd,
Thy vitals reach'd? can any one disclose
The real fact; or doth this palace harbour
A menial swarm in vain? for thee, for thee,

(21) Instead of σκὰ, with a comma prefixed, I, with Brunck, read σκὰ, and subjoin to it the comma, which appears to me a very material improvement with but a slight violation of the text.

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Alas, I grieve! what sorrows of my house,
Too great to be supported or express'd,
Are these which I have witness'd! but I perish;
These mansions are a desert, and my Sons
Have lost their Mother.

CHORUS.

Thou hast left, hast left
Thy friends, thou dearest and thou best of women,
Whom the resplendent Sun, or glimmering Moon
E'er visited in her nocturnal round.
O my unhappy, my unhappy Queen!
This house what dreadful evils have befallen!
Thy fate bedews these swimming eyes with tears
But shuddering to the sequel of our woes
Already I look forward.

THESEUS.

Ha, what means
The letter which she clasps in her dear hand,
What fresh intelligence can it contain?
Hath the deceas'd here written a request
For aught that to the marriage bed pertains,
And her sons' welfare; Thou pale shade, rely
On this assurance, that no other Dame
The widow'd couch of Theseus shall ascend,
Or enter these abodes. Yet with such force,
These well-known characters the golden ring
Of her who is no more hath here impress'd,
Allure me, that the seal I will burst open,
And learn what charge to me she would convey.

CHORUS.

Some God, alas! hath in succession heap'd
Evil on evil: such my fate, that life
Will be no longer any life to me
After this deed of horror. I pronounce
The house of my devoted Kings o'erthrown,
And now no more a house. Yet, O ye Gods,
This family, if possible, forbear

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To crush, and listen to my fervent vow.
Yet, like the soothsayer, my foreboding soul
An evil omen views.

THESEUS.

To my past woes,
What woes, alas! are added, far too great
To be endur'd or utter'd! wretched me!

CHORUS.

What fresh event is this? speak, if the secret
To me you can disclose.

THESEUS.

With loudest voice,
The letter echoes such atrocious crimes
As are not to be borne. To 'scape this load
Of misery, whither, whither shall I fly?
For I, alas! am utterly undone.
What strains of horror, have these wretched eyes
Beheld, in that portentous scroll exprest!

CHORUS.

All that is terrible, your words announce.

THESEUS.

Within the door of my indignant lips,
No longer thus will I contain a deed
Of unexampled guilt. O city, city!
Hippolytus with brutal force hath dar'd
To violate my bed, and set at nought
Jove's awful eye. O Neptune, O my Sire,
Since thou hast firmly promis'd that thou thrice
Would'st grant me what I pray'd for; now fulfill
(22) One vow, and slay my Son, nor let him 'scape
This single day, if thou, with me, design
To ratify the compact thou hast made.

(22) The Scholiast, on v. 1349 of this Tragedy, says, Theseus received an oracle from Apollo, informing him, that whatever he prayed for to Neptune should be granted him three times: he then arranges that Hero's petitions in the following order, first that he might return from Hell, secondly to be extricated from the labyrinth, and lastly that his Son Hippolytus might perish.

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CHORUS.

Recall that imprecation to the Gods:
For you, O King, your error will perceive;
Attend to my advice.

THESEUS.

These ears are clos'd:
Moreover I will drive him from the land;
For of these twofold fates, or this or that
Must smite him; Neptune, when he hears my curses,
Will plunge the miscreant to the shades of hell;
Else, cast forth from this region, and ordain'd
To wander in some foreign land, a life
Of the profoundest misery shall he drag.

CHORUS.

Behold how seasonably your Son himself,
Hippolytus, is coming: O subdue,
My royal Lord, subdue that baleful rage;
Consult the good of your unhappy house.

HIPPOLYTUS, THESEUS, CHORUS.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Hearing your voice, I with the utmost speed
Am hither come, O Father; tho' whence rise
These groans I know not, and from you would learn.
Ha! what is here? your Consort, O my Sire,
I see, a breathless corse: this needs must cause
The greatest wonder. Since I left her living,
How short the intervening space! but now
She op'd those eyes to view the radiant sun:
What dire mischance befell her, in what manner
She died, inform me. Are you silent still?
In our calamities of no avail
Is silence: for solicitous to know
All that hath pass'd, with greediness the heart
Explores a tale of woe; nor is it just,
My Father, your afflictions to conceal
From friends, and those who are yet more than friends.

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THESEUS.

O mortals, why, unprofitably lost
In many errors, strive ye to attain
A thousand specious arts, some new device
Still meditating, yet ye neither know
One rare attainment, nor by your enquiries
Could ever reach, the gift of teaching those
Who lack discretion, how to think aright?

HIPPOLYTUS.

The sage you speak of, he who could compel
Fools to grow wife, must be expert indeed.
But since the subtle arguments you use
Are so ill-tim'd, my Sire, I greatly fear
Your woes should cause your tongue to go beyond
The bounds of reason.

THESEUS.

With some clearer test
Man ought to have been furnish'd, to discern
The thoughts, and sever from the real friend
Each vile impostor. All the human race
Should have two voices, one of sacred truth;
No matter what, the other: 'gainst each plot
Devis'd by foul injustice, hence the first
Might in perpetual evidence come forth,
And none could be deceiv'd.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Hath any friend
Accus'd me in your ear, and fix'd reproach
Upon the guiltless? I with dire amaze
Am smitten: in such incoherent words
Your rage bursts forth, that horror fills my soul.

THESEUS.

Ah, whither will the mind of man proceed
In its career? can nature fix no bounds
To impudence? for if this evil take
Still deeper root thro' each succeeding age,
The Son grown more abandon'd than the Father,

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In pity to this world, the Gods should add
Another world sufficient to contain
All those who swerve from justice, and the brood
Of sinners. Look upon that impious wretch,
Tho' sprung from my own loins, who hath defil'd
My nuptial couch; too clearly, the deceas'd,
His most atrocious villainy hath prov'd.
Shew then thy face before thy injur'd Sire,
Since to this pitch of unexampled guilt
Thou hast proceeded. Yet art thou the man
Who holds familiar converse with the Gods
As tho' his life were perfect? art thou chaste
And pure from all defilement? by thy boasts
I will not be deluded, nor suspect
Thou canst impose upon the Powers Divine.
Now glory in thy vegetable food,
(23) Disciple of the tuneful Orpheus, rave
With Bacchus' frantic choir, and let the fumes
Of varied learning sooth thee. Thou art caught.
From me let all take warning, and avoid
Those artful hypocrites who bait the snare

(23) "In these words Euripides seems to me, with equal learning and "truth, to have ascribed the same origin to the institutions of Bacchus, "Orpheus, and Pythagoras, the latter of whom evidently borrowed from "Orpheus a total abstinence from animal food. *To eat no flesh as is re-*"*corded of antient Orpheus*, says Plutarch in his Banquet of the seven "wise men. Alexis and Antiphanes, in Athenæus, deride the Philoso-"phers for such abstinence; and in this respect Zeno imitated the Py-"thagoreans, making use, according to Diogenes Laertius, απυρῳ τροφῃ, "that is, of bread, honey, and such kind of food as could be prepared "without the aid of fire." VALKENAER.

Those readers who have not inclination or opportunity to consult the remains transmitted to us of the antient Philosophers, will see the admirable doctrines of Pythagoras, illustrated with all the energy and graces of poetry, by Ovid in his Metamorphoses, L. 15. v. 60—478. which my countrymen, who are acquainted only with their own language, may have the benefit of perusing in the version of that first of English translators the great Dryden, it being inserted in his Miscellaneous Works, published in 1760, by the late Mr. Derrick, Vol. IV. p. 41—68; and in the version of the Metamorphoses, published by Sir S. Garth.

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With words denoting great austerity,
While they contrive base projects. She is dead:
And so thou deem'st thyself secure; yet hence
Thy guilt, O miscreant, is more clearly prov'd.
What weightier oath, what plea canst thou devise
This letter to confute, that thou may'st 'scape
Unpunish'd for thy crime? wilt thou alledge
She hated thee, and that thy spurious birth
Makes the legitimate thy foes? 'twill argue
That she was prodigal of life, if thus
She forfeited whate'er her soul held dear
Thro' enmity to thee. But man belike
Is privileg'd from lust, whose power innate
Misleads frail woman. Well am I aware
Both male and female are alike expos'd
To danger, oft as Cytherea fires
The youthful heart, altho' a partial world
Forbear to brand our sex with equal shame.
But wherefore in an idle strife of words
With thee should I engage, when here, the corse,
That witness most irrefragable lies?
With speed an exile from this land depart,
Nor dare to enter Athens by the Gods
Erected, or the bounds of my domain.
For if from thee I tamely should submit
To wrongs like these, no more would Sinnis tell
How erst I slew him at the Isthmian pass,
But say my boasts are vain; nor would the rocks
Of Schiron, dash'd by the surrounding waves,
Call me the scourge of villains.

CHORUS.

At a loss
Am I, of any mortal how to speak
As truly happy: for their lot who once
Were blest, hath undergone a total change.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Tho' dreadful, O my Father, is the wrath
And vehement commotion of your soul,

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The charge against me which now seems so strong,
If duly search'd into, will prove devoid
Of truth and honour. I am not expert
At an harangue before assembled crowds,
Tho' somewhat better qualified to speak
Among my youthful comrades, and where few
Are present: a sufficient cause for this
May be assign'd; for they who are held cheap
Among the wise, in more harmonious strains
Address the people. Yet am I constrain'd
By the severe emergency to burst
The bonds of silence, and begin my speech
With a discussion of that odious charge
By you first urg'd against me, to convict,
And bar me from replying. Do your eyes
Behold the sun and wide extent of earth?
Say, what you list; of all the numerous tribes
Who here were born, there's not a man more chaste
Than I am: the first knowledge I acquir'd
Was this, to reverence the immortal Gods,
And with those friends associate who attempt
Nought by the laws condemn'd, but are endued
With a deep sense of virtuous shame, and scorn
Either themselves to practise or to aid
Unseemly actions. I ne'er made a jest
Of those whom I converse with, O my Sire,
But to my friends have still remain'd the same
When they are absent, as when near at hand:
And above all, by that peculiar crime
In which you think that you have caught me now,
Am I untainted: by impure delight
I to this day have never been entic'd.
Of love and its transactions nought I know,
Except what I from casual talk have heard
(24) Or seen in pictures, but I am not eager

(24) "Euripides here speaks of paintings, according to the manners "of his own times, and regardless of chronological propriety. In the "age of Theseus, no lascivious pictures yet existed. But the Poet is

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To look on these, for still my soul retains
Its virgin purity. But if no credence
My spotless chastity with you should find,
On you is it incumbent to shew how
I was corrupted. Did your Consort's charms
Eclipse all other women? could I hope
Beneath your roofs to dwell, and with your Wife
That I the rich inheritance should gain?
This sure had been the highest pitch of folly.
But what a bait is empire! none at all
To those who are discreet, unless a lust
For kingly power already hath corrupted
Those who delight in it. O'er all the sons
Of Greece, in every honourable strife,
Is it my great ambition to prevail,
And be the first; but rather in the state
Would I live happy with my dearest friends,
And occupy the second rank: for bliss
Exempt from every danger, there is found,
Transcending all that royalty can give.
One thing there is, by me not mentioned yet:
Tho' all beside already have you heard.
Had I a single witness like myself

" fond of similies taken from the art; and of this manner of speaking,
" which he introduces yet more preposterously in his Trojan Captives,
" where Hecuba says,

" Αυδη μεν ουπω ναος εστιδην σκαφος,
" Γραφη δ' ιδουσα, και πλινσο' επισαμαι." V. 681.
I ne'er did mount
A ship, yet I from pictures and report
These matters know.

" for if painting was known at the time of the Trojan war, which I can
" by no means believe, I would ask, is it probable that Hecuba, grown
" old at Troy, in a town situated near the sea-shore, should have seen
" no ships except in pictures?" BRUNCK.

Though I entirely concur in the above interpretation, it may be proper not to close this note without mentioning that Melancthon renders γραφη λινσσειν, video scripturam, and Ratalleer, literas istas videns; and that their versions are supported by the authority of the Scholiast.

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Of tried veracity, and could debate
With her while yet she liv'd, you from the fact,
After a strict enquiry, might decide
Which was the criminal. But now, by Jove
Who guards the oath inviolate, I swear
And by the conscious Ground on which we tread,
That I your Consort never did approach,
No not in will or deed. May I expire
Stript of renown, and overwhelm'd with shame,
Torn from my country, my paternal house,
An exile and a vagrant thro' the world,
Nor may the ocean or the earth receive
My breathless corse, if I have thus transgress'd!
(25) I know not whether 'twas thro' fear she lost
Her life, and more than this I must not say.
With her, discretion amply hath supplied
The place of chastity; I still have practis'd
That virtue, but, alas! without success.

CHORUS.

Sufficient is it to refute the charge
That thou this oath hast taken, and call'd down
The Powers immortal to attest its truth.

THESEUS.

Is he not rather an audacious cheat,
Trusting in magic arts, who dares to think
He by an oath can bias the resolves
Of his insulted Sire?

HIPPOLYTUS.

The part you act
Challenges my astonishment: were you
My Son, and I your Father, had you dar'd

(25) "This might be spoken with truth by Hippolytus; and there was "some room for doubt, whether Phædra had put an end to her own "life, because she was enraged at the repulse she had met with, or "through fear. The verse of Hippolytus, or Virbius, in Ovid,

"Judiciine metu magis, offensâne repulsæ.

"Met. L. xv. v. 502.

"seems to me to depend on another which is lost." VALKENAER.

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To violate my Wife, I would not banish,
But kill you.

THESEUS.

Seasonable remark: the sentence
Which on thyself with justice thou hast pass'd
I will not now inflict; for instant death
Is grateful to the wretched. But ordain'd
An exile from thy native land to roam,
A life of tedious sorrow shalt thou drag
In foreign realms; such are the wages due
To an unrighteous man.

HIPPOLYTUS.

What means my Sire?
Instead of waiting till impartial time
The merits of my conduct ascertain,
Hence will you banish me?

THESEUS.

Had I the power,
Beyond the ocean, and where Atlas stands
Upon the (26) utmost limits of the world,
So strong the hatred which to thee I bear —

HIPPOLYTUS.

What, without searching into any proof
From oath, or witness, or the voice of Seers,
Expel me uncondemn'd from these domains!

THESEUS.

This letter, which no soothsayer can require
To make it better understood, the charge

(26) Virgil's idea of the farthest extremity of the world is somewhat similar, and more circumstantially marked out,

Oceani finem juxta, solemque cadentem
Ultimus Æthiopum locus est, ubi maximus Atlas
Axem humero torquet Æn. L. iv. v. 480.

"Where the Sun sets, and utmost Ocean ends,
"The farthest bounds of Æthiopia lie;
"There mighty Atlas on his shoulders bears
"Heaven's axis." STRAHAN.

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'Gainst thee authenticates; so to those birds
Who hover o'er our heads I bid adieu.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Why am I not permitted, O ye Gods,
To ope my mouth, when I my ruin owe
To you whom I adore? I will not speak:
For he I ought to move hath 'gainst my voice
Clos'd his obdurate ears: I should infringe
A solemn oath, and sport with Heaven in vain.

THESEUS.

To me past all endurance is that mask
Of sanctity which thou assum'st. With speed
Why go'st thou not from thy paternal land?

HIPPOLYTUS.

Whither can I betake myself? what friend
Will to his house admit an exil'd wretch
Charg'd with this great offence?

THESEUS.

Whoe'er receives
Each base invader of the marriage bed,
And with the wicked man delights to dwell.

HIPPOLYTUS.

What wounds my soul, and from these eyes extorts
The tear, is your believing me so wicked.

THESEUS.

There was a proper season for these groans
And all thy forethought, when thou to dishonour
The Consort of thy Father didst presume.

HIPPOLYTUS.

O mansions, would to Heaven that ye a voice
Could utter, and your testimony give,
Whether I have transgress'd.

THESEUS.

Hast thou recourse
To witnesses who lack the power of speech?
Beyond all words this deed thy guilt displays.

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HIPPOLYTUS.

In such position as to view my soul
O could I stand, that I might cease to weep
For the calamities I now endure!

THESEUS.

Thou thine own merits hast much more been wont
To reverence, than with pious awe to treat
Thy parents as thy duty doth enjoin.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Unhappy Mother! wretched Son! avert
The curse which on a spurious race attends,
From those who share my friendship, righteous Gods!

THESEUS.

Will ye not drag him from my sight, ye slaves?
Did you not hear how I long since decreed
He shall be banish'd!

HIPPOLYTUS.

They should rue it soon,
If they presum'd to touch me. But yourself
May from these realms expel me if you list.

THESEUS.

If thou obey not these commands, I will:
For I feel no compassion for thy exile.

[*Exit* THESEUS.

HIPPOLYTUS.

The sentence is, it seems, already pass'd;
Wretch that I am! My doom indeed I know,
Yet know not in what language to express
The pangs I feel.—O thou to me most dear
Of all the Gods, Latona's virgin Daughter,
Who dwell'st with me, companion of the chase,
Far from illustrious Athens let us fly;
I to that city and Erectheus' land
Now bid farewell.——O thou Trœzenian realm,
Fraught with each varied pleasure youth admires,
Adieu: I see thee now for the last time,
And these last parting words to thee address.

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Come, O ye youths, my comrades, hither come,
Speak kindly to me now, and till we reach
The frontiers of this country, on my steps
Attend. For ye shall ne'er behold a man
More chaste, tho' such I seem not to my Sire.

[*Exit* HIPPOLYTUS.

CHORUS.

O D E.

I. 1.

When I reflect on Heaven's just sway,
Each anxious thought is driven away;
But, ah! too soon, hope's flattering prospect ends,
And in this harrass'd soul despair succeeds;
When I compare with human deeds,
What fate those deeds attends.
At each various period changing,
Form'd upon no settled plan,
In a maze of errors ranging,
Veers the precarious life of man.

I. 2.

May the kind Gods' paternal care,
Attentive to their votary's prayer,
Grant unallay'd prosperity and wealth,
Let me enjoy, without conspicuous fame,
A character unstain'd by shame,
With mental ease and health:
Thus exempt from wrinkled sorrow,
Would I ape the circling mode,
Alter my conduct with the morrow,
And snatch each pleasure as it flow'd.

II. 1.

Now I a heart no longer pure
Against the shocks of fortune can secure,
But feel at length e'en hope itself expire:
Since from the land we see that star whose light,
On Athens shone serenely bright.
Remov'd by Theseus' ire.

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Lament, thick scatter'd on the shore, ye sands,
Where Trœzene's city stands,
And steep mountains, which ascending
With thy hounds to trace the prey,
Thou, Hippolytus, attending
Dictynna, the swift hind didst slay.

II.

No longer the Hennetian steeds
Yok'd to thy chariot, o'er yon sacred meads
Around the ring, wilt thou expertly guide.
The muse, whose lyre is doom'd to sound no more,
Shall the paternal house deplore
Bereft of thee its pride.
For Dian's haunts beneath th' embowering shade,
Now no hand the wreath will braid.
Thou art from this region banish'd,
Hence is Hymen's torch decay'd:
All prospects of thy love are vanish'd,
The rivalry of many a maid.

III.

By thy calamity inspir'd
With plaintive strains, will I bewail thy fate,
O wretched Mother, who in vain
The throes of childbirth didst sustain.
I with indignant hate
Against the Gods themselves are fir'd.
Ah, gentle Graces, smiling at his birth,
Could not you screen by your benignant power
Your guiltless votary, in an evil hour
Sentenc'd to wander far from his paternal earth?

The servant of Hippolytus, with looks
Which witness grief, I see in haste approach.

MESSENGER, CHORUS.

MESSENGER.

Ye matrons, whither shall I speed my course

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To find the royal Theseus? if ye know,
Inform me; is the monarch here within?

CHORUS.

Forth from the palace he in person comes.

THESEUS, MESSENGER, CHORUS.

MESSENGER.

O Theseus, the intelligence I bring
Deserves the serious thoughts of you, and all
The citizens who, or in Athens, dwell,
Or on the borders of Trœzene's land.

THESEUS.

What mean'st thou? hath some recent woe befallen
These (27) two adjacent cities?

MESSENGER.

In one word,
To sum up all, Hippolytus is dead;
For he but for a moment views the sun.

THESEUS.

Say, by what hostile arm the miscreant fell.
Did any one, whose Wife with brutal force,
As late his Father's, he defil'd, assail him?

MESSENGER.

The fiery coursers who his chariot drew
Destroy'd him, and the curses you address'd
To the stern ruler of the deep, your Sire,
Against your Son.

THESEUS.

Thanks, O ye righteous Gods,
Now, (28) Neptune, hast thou prov'd thyself my Father,
Since thou my imprecations hast fulfill'd.

(27) Trœzene, which is in the Peloponesus, and situated in the extremity of the province of Argos, is separated by the bay of Saron from Athens, which lies on the opposite shore of the main continent of Greece.

(28) Apollodorus, L. 3. c. 7, leaves it equally dubious with Euripides, whether the God Neptune, or Ægeus the husband of Æthra, was the real Father of Theseus.

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Inform me how he perish'd, how the sword
Of Justice smote the villain who hath wrong'd me?

MESSENGER.

We, near the beach, oft dash'd by the hoarse waves
Of ocean, smooth'd his generous coursers' manes, (29)
Yet weeping. For a messenger arriv'd
With tidings, that Hippolytus no more
Would to this realm be suffer'd to return,
Sentenc'd by you to miserable exile.
But, to confirm this piteous tale, soon came
The banish'd Prince, and join'd us on the strand,
A numerous groupe of comrades on his steps
Attended: after a long pause, he said,
Ceasing his plaints; "why still should I lament
"My doom, my Father's word must be obey'd:
"Those steeds, ye servants, harness to the car;
"Trœzene is no longer my abode."
Soon as we heard, all hasten'd: these commands
Scarce was there time to issue, when we brought
The ready coursers harness'd to their Lord:
Mounting his chariot then the reins he seiz'd,
When he his feet had in strong (30) buskins clad:

(29) "It by no means surprises me that the long account of Hippo-"lytus' death, even in Racine's Tragedy, set off as it is with a great "variety of ornaments, seems tedious to some of the best critics of "France. The elaborate remarks of M. A. Racine, in the Memoirs of "the Academy of Inscriptions, Tom. 8. p. 311, are extremely worthy "of being perused." VALKENAER.

(30) This construction of the word αμβλαισιν is objected to by Valkenaer and Dr. Musgrave, on the authority of Eustathius on Homer's Iliad, L. 2. v. 728, where this passage of Euripides is cited, and αμβλαι are supposed to be the semicircular projections on each side of the chariot, on which the charioteer fixed his feet: but Henry Stephens, in his Greek Thesaurus, confirms the usual acceptation of the word αμβλαι in this place, by the citation of it, in the Etymologicum Magnum. Reiskius does not dissent from this interpretation, but objects to the epithet αυταισιν, and proposes the choice of three others. Dr. Musgrave proposes ξεσαις τε, but [illegible] to have wavered, and been undetermined both as to the substantive and adjective, his Latin version being vilibus ocreis; but the very words αυταις αμβλαις stand unchallenged in the Bacchanalians, v. 1132, ed. Barnes, where it is impossible to interpret the expression in any other sense than sandals or buskins.

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But first with hands outspread invok'd the Gods,
And cried; O righteous Jove, here end my life,
" If I have sinn'd: but let my Father know
(31) " How much he wrongs us, whether we expire,
" Or still behold the light." With lifted thong
The rapid coursers onward then he drove;
We servants close behind our master's car
Follow'd along (32) the Epidaurian road
Which leads direct to Argos. But at length,
Passing the limits of this realm, we enter'd
A wilderness adjoining to the coast
Of the Saronian deep: a dreadful sound
Was from the inmost caverns of the earth
Sent forth, like Jove's own thunder, while the steeds
Astonish'd, with their heads and ears erect
T'wards Heaven, stopp'd short. An instant terror seiz'd
On all of us; we wondered whence the sound
Could issue, till at length, as on the beach
We look'd, a mighty wave we saw, which reach'd (33)

(31) " The Scholiast observes, that this verse is marked with the letter " X, which is affixed to it as a sign of disapprobation by the Grammarians, on account of the singular number being changed into the plural. " For when the Athenians waged war against Chios, they were so extremely violent in their hatred of its inhabitants, that they marked " counterfeit coin, and whatever they disliked, with a X, the initial " letter of the Greek word Χιος, to express their contempt." BARNES.

(32) I have followed Valkenaer in reading Κ'επιδαυρου, for which he cites the authority of Florentine and Parisian manuscripts, Epidaurus being, as he observes, situated in the road from Troezene to Argos.

(33) " Euripides has copied this expression of Κυμ' υρσου στηριζω from " Homer, whose Discord,

" Parva metu primo, mox sese attollit in auras,
" ——— et caput inter nubila condit.

" in the Iliad, L. 4. v. 443.

" ολιγη μεν τε πρωθα κορυσσεται· αυταρ επειτα
" Ουρανω εστηριξε καρη, και επι χθονι βαινει.

" Small at her birth, but rising every hour,
" While scarce the skies her horrid head can bound,
" She stalks on Earth." POPE.

VALKENAER.

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The skies, and from our view conceal'd the cliffs
Of Sciron, the whole isthmus cover'd o'er,
And Æsculapius' rock, then to a size
The most enormous swollen, and pouring forth
With loud explosion foam on every side,
The tide impell'd it onward to the coast
Where stood the harness'd steeds; amid the storm
And whirlwind's rage, the wave disgorg'd a Bull,
Ferocious monster, with whose bellowings fill'd,
All earth resounded horribly: our eyes
Scarce could endure the sight. With panic fear
The steeds were seiz'd that instant: but meantime
Their Lord, who to the managing them long
Had been inur'd, caught up with both his hands
The reins, and drew them tight, as the rude oar
A sailor plies; exerting all his strength,
Then backward lean'd, and twisted them around
His body: but the raging coursers gnash'd
Their steely curbs, and scour'd along the field
Regardless of the hand that steer'd their course,
Or rein or polish'd car. Along the plain,
If he attempted their career to guide,
The Bull in front appear'd, to turn them back,
And e'en to madness scar'd: but if they ran
Close to the shelving rocks with frantic rage,
He, silently approaching, follow'd hard
Behind the chariot; 'gainst a rugged cliff,
Till he the wheel directing, had o'erthrown
The vehicle. 'Twas dire confusion all:
Upward the spokes and shiver'd axle flew;
The hapless youth entangled in the reins,
Confin'd by an inextricable bond,
Was dragg'd along; against the rock his head
With violence was dash'd, and his whole body
Receiv'd full many a wound. These horrid words
He utter'd with a shriek; "Stop, O my steeds,
"Nor kill the master in whose stalls ye fed!

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" O dreadful imprecations of my Sire!
" Who is at hand to save a virtuous man?"
Tho' many wish'd to rescue him, too late
We came. But from the broken reins releas'd,
At length, I know not by what means, he fell,
In a small portion yet the breath of life
Retaining. But the horses, from all eyes,
And that accursed monster, were conceal'd
Among the mountains, where, I cannot tell.
Tho' I indeed, O King, am in your house
A servant, yet I never can be brought
To think your Son was with such guilt defil'd,
Tho' the whole race of women should expire
Suspended in the noose, and every pine
On Ida's summit were with letters fill'd;
So well am I convinc'd that he was virtuous.

CHORUS.

The measure of our recent woes is full:
No means, alas, are left for us to 'scape
The sentence of unalterable fate.

THESEUS.

From hatred to the man who hath endur'd
These sufferings, I with pleasure heard thy tale:
But now thro' a just reverence for the Gods,
And for that wretch, because he was my Son,
I from his woes, nor joy, nor sorrow feel. (34)

(34) The close resemblance between this line and the following passage in Lycophron.

ῳ γαλως απεχθέλαι
Και δακρυ· τῆς δ'ἰςι, και τήλεμος
Αμφαν. v. 117.

there spoken of Proteus king of Egypt, on hearing of his two wicked Sons Polygonus and Telegonus, who had infested Thrace, being slain by Hercules, seems to have struck Barnes (who refers to the history, without mentioning the Author by whom it is related), and has not passed unnoticed by the commentators on Lycophron. The Scholia of Tzetzes call the elder Son of Proteus, Tmolus: but it appears from Apollodorus, who has been followed by Archbishop Potter, that his name was Polygonus.

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MESSENGER.

But whither must we bear the dying youth,
To gratify your wish, or how proceed?
Consider well: but if you would adopt
My counsels, you with harshness would not treat
Your hapless Son.

THESEUS.

The miscreant hither bring;
That I, when face to face I shall behold
Him who denies that he my nuptial bed
Polluted, may convict him by my words,
And these calamities the Gods inflict.

[*Exit* MESSENGER.

CHORUS.

To yours, O Venus, and your Son's control,
Whose glittering pinions speed his flight,
The Gods incline their stubborn soul,
And mortals yielding to resistless might.
For, o'er land, and stormy main,
Love, is borne, who can restrain
By more than magic art
Each furious impulse of the heart:
Savage whelps on mountains bred,
Monsters in the ocean fed,
All who on earth behold the solar ray,
And man, his mild behests obey.
For you, O Venus, you alone
Sit on an unrivall'd throne,
By each duteous votary fear'd,
As a mighty Queen rever'd.

DIANA, THESEUS, CHORUS.

DIANA.

Thee, sprung from noble Ægeus, I command

Canterus observes, that Phædo, in Plato, says that he found himself in the same equal suspence, between joy and grief, on receiving the account of the death of Socrates.

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To listen, for to thee Diana speaks,
The Daughter of Latona. Why, O Theseus,
Do these disastrous tidings fill thy heart
With pleasure, when unjustly thou hast slain
Thy Son, the false assertions of thy Consort
On no clear proof believing? yet too clear
Is the atrocious guilt thou hast incurr'd.
Cover'd with shame, why hid'st thou not thy head
In gloomy Tartarus, in the realms beneath;
Or, this abhorr'd pollution to escape,
On active wings why mount'st thou not the skies?
In the society of virtuous men
Thou canst not pass the remnant of thy life.
Hear me, O Theseus, while I state the ills
In which thou art involv'd: tho' now to thee
It can avail no longer, thy regret
Will I excite. The purposes I came for
Are these; to shew that to thy Son belongs
An upright heart, how to preserve his fame
His life he loses, and that frantic rage
Thy Consort seiz'd, whose conduct hath in part
Been generous: for, with lawless passion stung,
By that pernicious Goddess, whom myself,
And all to whom virginity is dear,
Peculiarly abhor, she lov'd thy Son,
And while she strove by reason to o'ercome
Th' assaults of Venus, unconsenting fell
By those vile stratagems her Nurse devis'd,
Who to thy Son the Queen's disease reveal'd
Under the aweful sanction of an oath;
But he, by justice render'd strong, complied not
With her solicitations, yet no wrongs
Which he from thee experienc'd, could provoke
The pious youth to violate that faith
Which he had sworn to. She meanwhile alarm'd,
Lest to his Father he her guilt should prove,
Wrote that deceitful letter, on thy soul

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Gaining too prompt a credence, and thy Son
Hath by her baleful artifice destroy'd.

THESEUS.

Ah me!

DIANA.

Doth what I have already spoken,
O Theseus, wound thee? to the sequel lend
A patient ear, and thou shalt find just cause
To wail yet more. Thou know'st thy Sire engag'd
That thy petitions thrice he would fulfill;
And one of these, O thou most impious man,
Which might have slain some foe, hast thou employ'd
In the destruction of thy Son. Thy Father,
Who rules the ocean, tho' to thee a friend,
Gave what he promis'd, by strict honor bound.
But thou to him, as well as me, must seem
Devoid of worth, who waiting for no oath
To be administer'd, nor till the Seers
Could utter a response, or length of time
Enable thee to search into the truth,
Thy curses hast too hastily pour'd forth
Against thy Son, and slain him.

THESEUS.

Aweful Queen,
Would I were dead!

DIANA.

Thou hast committed crimes
Most horrid; but may'st haply still obtain
Heaven's gracious pardon: since at the behest
Of Venus these calamitous events
Took place to satiate her relentless ire.
For 'tis a law among the Gods, that none
Shall thwart (35) another's will; we all renounce
Such interference. Else be thou assur'd
Had I not dreaded Jove, into such shame

(35) Thus, according to Ovid, Jupiter being unable to restore the eye-sight of Tiresias, which Juno had deprived him of, gave him the faculty of

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I never would have fall'n, nor suffer'd him
Whom I hold dearest of the human race,
To perish. As for thy offence, thou first
By ignorance, from malice art absolv'd;
Again, thy Consort, the deceas'd, us'd words
Of strong persuasion to mislead thy soul.
Now by the mighty conflux of these woes
Thou chiefly art o'erwhelm'd: but I too grieve.
For in a good man's death the righteous Gods
Rejoice not: with their children and their house,
Tho' we the wicked utterly destroy.

HIPPOLYTUS, DIANA, THESEUS, CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Here comes the hapless youth, his graceful frame
And auburn locks disfigur'd. Wretched house!
What twofold woes, thro' Heaven's supreme behest,
Invade this family!

HIPPOLYTUS.

How am I rent,
Ah me, thro' those unrighteous vows pronounc'd
By an unrighteous Father! thro' my head
Shoot dreadful pangs, and strong convulsions rend
My tortur'd brain. Ah me! lay down to rest
This shatter'd body! ye accursed steeds,
Tho' fed with my own hand, have ye destroy'd
And slain your master. Ah, I by the Gods
Entreat you, softly handle, O my friends,
This wounded frame. Who stands there on my right?
Carefully raise me up, and bear along
With even step a wretch who hath been curs'd
By his mistaken Sire. Jove, righteous Jove,

foretelling future events to make him amends.

" Neque enim licet irrita cuiquam
" Facta Dei fecisse Deo. Met. L. iii. v. 335.
" For so it is in Heaven decreed
" That no one God repeal another's deed." ADDISON.

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Behold'st thou this? I who devoutly worship'd
The Gods, and all the human race excell'd
In chastity, depriv'd of life am plung'd
Into the yawning subterraneous realms
Of Orcus. Sure I exercis'd in vain
Each pious toil to benefit mankind.
My pangs return afresh. Let loose your hold.
Come, Death, thou best of medicines(36). Kill me, kill me.
O for a sword to pierce my heart, and close
In endless slumbers this detested life.
How inauspicious was my Father's curse!
That lingering vengeance which pursues the guilt
By my (37) Progenitors, in antient days,
Committed, and my kindred who are stain'd
With recent murders, terminate in me,
No longer now suspended. O ye Gods,
Why do ye punish me who had no share
In those enormities? but in what words
Can I express myself, or how escape
From the oppressive numbness which weighs down
My senses? would to Heaven, the Fates who haunt
Pluto's abode, the realm of antient night,
Would lay me down in everlasting sleep!

DIANA.

With what calamity, O hapless Youth,
Hast thou been yok'd! it is thy generous soul
Which hath destroy'd thee.

(36) Upon examining several of the different Latin versions, I find that published under the name of Dorotheus Camillus, and those of Melancthon and Rataleer, all three concur with me in rendering θεοστυγὴς ὀλοὶς as the imperative mood.

(37) The concurrence of Reiskius, Heath, Valkenaer, and Musgrave, has induced me to transpose the two lines of

Πελασσον προγονοῖσιν
Μιαφονων τε συγγενων

the latter of which is placed first by Barnes and the earlier editors: by "*Progenitors*" are generally understood Tantalus and Pelops, from whom descended Pittheus, Æthra, Theseus, Hippolytus; and by "*Kindred*" Atreus and Thyestes, with perhaps a glance at Theseus' murder of the Sons of Pallas.

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HIPPOLYTUS.

From celestial lips
How doth a fragrant odor breathe around!
Amid my sufferings thee did I perceive,
The pangs I feel were instantly assuag'd.
Diana sure is here.

DIANA.

Beside thee stands
Thy favourite Goddess.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Dost thou see my woes,
O thou whom I adore?

DIANA.

These eyes behold
What thou endur'st: but they no (38) tear must shed.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Thy faithful comrade in the silvan chase
Thy votary is no more.

DIANA.

Alas! no more!
Yet e'en in death to me thou still art (39) dear.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Nor he who drove thy fiery steeds, and watch'd
Thy images.

(38) Ovid, speaking of Apollo when he had slain Coronis:

Tam vero genitus (neque enim celestia tangi
Ora decet lachrymis) alto de corde petitos
Edidit. Met. L. ii. v. 621.

"With sighs and groans her obsequies he kept,
"And, if a God could weep, the God had wept." ADDISON.

and of Ceres bewailing the loss of her Daughter Proserpine,

Dixit, & ut lachrymæ (neque enim lachrymare Deorum est)
Decidit in tepidos lucida gutta sinus. Fast. L. iv. v. 521.

She spoke, and in the semblance of a tear,
(For by no tears are griefs of Gods expreat)
From the pure fount of those celestial eyes
Stole lucid drops adown her heaving breast.

Virgil however, in the first book of his Æneids, introduces Venus, and, in the tenth, Hercules, after his admission among the Gods, as shedding tears.

(39) Πεσφιλης, instead of διοσδμος, in Valkenaer and Musgrave, on the authority of several antient manuscripts.

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DIANA.

These stratagems, by Venus
From whom all mischief takes its rise, were plann'd.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Too well I know the Goddess who destroy'd me.

DIANA.

For her neglected homage much enrag'd
Against thee, to the chaste a constant foe.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Us three I find her hatred hath undone.

DIANA.

Thy Father, Thou, and his unhappy Wife
Complete that number.

HIPPOLYTUS.

I bewail my Sire.

DIANA.

Him by her arts that Goddess hath misled.

HIPPOLYTUS.

To you, my Father, this event hath prov'd
A source of woes abundant.

THESEUS.

O my Son,
I perish, and in life have now no joy.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Yet more for you, who have been thus deluded,
Than for myself, I grieve.

THESEUS.

My Son, I gladly
Would die to save thee.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Fatal gifts of Neptune
Your Father.

THESEUS.

Now most earnestly I wish
These lips had never utter'd such a prayer.

HIPPOLYTUS.

What then? you would have slain me, such your wrath.

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THESEUS.

Because I by the Gods was then depriv'd
Of understanding.

HIPPOLYTUS.

O that in return
Mankind could with their curses blast the Gods!

DIANA.

Be pacified: for in earth's darksome caves,
The rage of Venus who on thee hath wreak'd
Such horrors for thy pure and virtuous soul
I will not suffer unaton'd to rest.
For in requital, my vindictive hand
With these inevitable darts shall smite.
(40) The dearest of her votaries. But on thee
These sufferings to reward will I bestow
The greatest honors in Trœzene's realm:
(41) For to thy shade, ere jocund Hymen wave
The kindled torch, each nymph her tresses shorn
Shall dedicate, and with abundant tears
For a long season thy decease bewail.
In their harmonious ditties the chaste choir

(40) "The Scholiast calls those delirious who think that Adonis is here "meant, when he was not slain by the shafts of Diana, but the jealousy "of Mars, who sent a wild Boar to destroy him. But, with permission "of the Scholiast, I contend this ought to be referred to Adonis: for as "Pet. Victorius observes, in his various readings, L. iv. c. 17; "though "he was slain by the Boar, Mars being the author of this death, Diana "might lay claim to this exploit, because Adonis lost his life in her fa-"vourite pursuit of hunting." But what puts the matter out of all doubt "is, that Apollodorus himself, L. iii. c. 13. § 4. bears witness, that "Adonis was slain by Diana: his words are these; "Adonis, yet a boy, "through the anger of Diana, perished as he was hunting by a wound "which he received from a Boar." Muretus made this observation be-"fore me, Var. Lect. L. 5, c. 7." BARNES.

(41) "The Trœzenians worshipped Hippolytus with anniversary sacred "rites as a Hero, supposing him borne to the starry heavens by the name "of *the Charioteer:* they honoured him also with a temple; which Pau-"sanias, L. 2. c. 32, describes as situated in a most beautiful grove, and "records this circumstance of the Virgins, previous to their marriage, "cutting off their hair, and depositing it for a votive gift, as the Poet "here mentions." VALKENAER.

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Of virgins ever shall record thy fate,
Nor pass unnotic'd Phædra's hapless love.
But, O thou son of Ægeus, in those arms
Embrace the dying youth; for 'gainst thy will
Didst thou destroy him. When the Gods ordain
That man should err, he cannot disobey.
This counsel, O Hippolytus, to thee
I give; no hatred to thy Father bear,
For well thou know'st from whence thy fate arose.
And now farewell! for I am not allow'd
To view unholy corses of the slain,
Or with the pangs of those who breathe their last
Pollute these eyes: too clearly I discern
That thou art near the moment of thy death.

[*Exit* DIANA.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Farewell, blest Virgin, grieve not thus to part
From a most faithful votary, who with thee
Hath long held converse. With my Sire I end
All strife at thy behest; for to thy words
I still have been obedient. Wretched me!
Already thickest darkness overspreads
These swimming eyes. My Father, in your arms
Receive me, and support this sinking frame.

THESEUS.

How, O my Son, dost thou increase my woes!

HIPPOLYTUS.

I perish, and already view the gates
Of yon drear realms beneath.

THESEUS.

But wilt thou leave
My Soul polluted?

HIPPOLYTUS.

No, from the foul crime
You I absolve.

THESEUS.

What said'st thou? Shall the stain

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Of having shed thy blood no longer rest
On me thy murderer?

HIPPOLYTUS.

Let Diana witness,
Who with her shafts subdues the savage brood.

THESEUS.

How generous is this treatment of thy Sire,
My dearest Son!

HIPPOLYTUS.

Farewell! a long adieu
I bid to you, my Father.

THESEUS.

Ah, how pious,
How virtuous is thy soul!

HIPPOLYTUS.

Implore the Gods
That all your race legitimate may tread
In the same path.

THESEUS.

Desert me not, my Son;
Take courage.

HIPPOLYTUS.

It is now, alas! too late,
For, O my Sire, I die. Make no delay,
But with this garment cover o'er my face. *(He dies.)*

THESEUS.

Minerva's fortress, thou Athenian realm,
Of what a virtuous Prince art thou depriv'd!
Ah, wretched me! how oft shall I reflect,
O Venus, on the ills which thou hast caus'd.

CHORUS.

On our whole city hath this public loss
Fallen unforeseen. Abundant tears shall flow.
When bleed the mighty, their sad history leaves
A more profound impression on the heart.

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ALCESTIS.

Εθελησασα μονη υπερ του ανδρος αποθανειν, ουτως αυτου Πατερος τε και μητερος· και τουτ' εργασαμενη το εργον, ουτω καλον εδοξεν εργασασθαι ου μονον ανθρωποις αλλα και θεοις, ωστε εξ Αιδου την ψυχην ικεινης ανενεγκαι. PLATO.

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PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

APOLLO.

DEATH.

CHORUS OF THE OLD MEN OF PHERÆA.

FEMALE ATTENDANT OF ALCESTIS.

ALCESTIS.

A SERVANT.

ADMETUS.

EUMELUS.

HERCULES.

PHERES.

SCENE—THE VESTIBULE OF ADMETUS' PALACE IN PHERÆA, A CITY OF THESSALY.

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ALCESTIS.

APOLLO.

House of Admetus, underneath thy roof,
I, tho' a God, have been reduc'd to share
The servile board: the guilty cause was Jove,
Who my lov'd offspring Æsculapius slew,
Transpiercing with a Thunderbolt his breast:
Enraged at this atrocious deed, I smote
The Cyclops, curst artificers, who forg'd
The flames which Heaven's vindictive Father wields;
And therefore did the God in penal wrath
Make me an abject hireling to a lord
Of human race: for when I reach'd this land
A stranger's herds I fed, and to this hour
These mansions have preserv'd, because myself
Am holy, and a fit asylum (1) found
In the abode of Pheres' holy son,
Whom I have rescued from immediate death,
By overreaching the relentless Fates;
For those stern Goddesses to me have given
A promise that Admetus shall escape
Th' impending stroke, if in his stead the shades
Receive some other victim. Having tried
And canvass'd every friend; his hoary sire,
The aged mother too, that gave him birth:
None but his Wife he found, who on such terms
Consented to redeem him from the grave.
Now in the palace, by her servants' arms

(1) Ἐντυχὼν nactus eram, is the reading restored by Dr. Musgrave from all the Parisian manuscripts and the edition of Lascaris: in Aldus, Barnes, Dr. Morell, and the other editions, it stands ἐντυχὼν erat; ὤν; is consequently there understood as spoken of the house.

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Sustain'd, she lingers at her latest gasp:
For it is destin'd that this very day
She shall expire, and quit the realms of light,
But lest pollution, while I yet remain
Under this roof, o'ertake me, thro' constraint
I these lov'd walls abandon; for that Priest
Of souls departed, Death, e'en now I see
Approaching; her to Pluto's realms beneath
Will he conduct; he in due season comes,
Watching the hour assign'd for her decease.

(2) DEATH, APOLLO.

DEATH.

Ha! why art thou, O Phœbus, at these gates?
What errand brings thee hither? thou repeat'st
Thy past injustice, when thou aim'st to rob
Of their due honours the infernal Gods:
For thee sufficient was it not to bar
Admetus' destiny, by treacherous arts
The Fates deceiving? but a second time
Now hast thou arm'd that hand, the quiver stor'd
With pointed shafts still wielding, in behalf
Of Pelias' daughter, tho' she hath engag'd

(2) The Aldus edition, those printed at Basil, Henry Stephens's Tragediæ Selectæ which bear the date of 1567, and a 4to. with the Greek only of this single play, Paris ap. Libert. 1619, and the Latin versions of Camillus and Melancthon, give this personage the name of Charon: but in the first edition of the Medea, Hippolytus, Alcestis, and Andromache, by Lascaris, which bears no date, but is said to have been printed at Florence before the close of the fifteenth century, the Scholiasts, Canterus, Barnes, and the modern editors, he is called Death, as in the close of the preceding speech. Servius, in his notes on Virgil, says, that *Mercury* is here introduced; for thus stands the passage in the editions I have consulted, printed by Valdarfer, in 1471, and by Robert Stephens in 1532, though in that of La Cerda it is altered: but Juno, in Virgil, sends Iris to cut the hair of the expiring Dido; which office this personage (whoever he be) assumes to himself in the close of the dialogue before us.

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That to redeem her Lord, she in his stead
Will yield up her own life.

APOLLO.

Be of good cheer,
For I am just, and reason is my guide.

DEATH.

If thou art just, what means that hostile bow?

APOLLO.

This weapon I am ever wont to bear.

DEATH.

That thou with lawless might this house may'st aid

APOLLO.

My friend's distress hangs heavy on my soul.

DEATH.

Would'st thou bereave me of this second victim?

APOLLO.

From you the first I did not take away
By violence.

DEATH.

How dwells he then on earth,
Not in the realms beneath?

APOLLO.

He for his Wife,
Whom to demand you come, hath been exchang'd,

DEATH.

Her to the nether world I will convey.

APOLLO.

O take her, and depart; for much I fear
I cannot move you—

DEATH.

To slay him who ought
To perish? I for this am come prepar'd.

APOLLO.

No: but to smite the tardy.

DEATH.

I perceive
Thy drift.

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APOLLO.

And may Alcestis hence attain
Mature old age?

DEATH.

This cannot be allow'd:
Thou know'st I too am gratified by homage.

APOLLO.

More than one single life you must not take.

DEATH.

When die the young, my glories are increas'd.

APOLLO.

But in mature old age if she expire,
She will be buried sumptuously.

DEATH.

The law
Thou hast propos'd, O Phœbus, tends to serve
The rich, and them alone.

APOLLO.

What mean these words?
Are you grown wise? I knew not this before.

DEATH.

They who had any wealth might buy me off
Till they grew old.

APOLLO.

Will you not therefore grant,
At my request, this favour?

DEATH.

By no means:
Thou know'st my usage,

APOLLO.

Hostile to mankind,
And by the Gods abhorr'd.

DEATH.

Thou canst not hope
To compass each exorbitant desire.

APOLLO.

With all this fierceness, soon shall you grow mild;

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A man of such distinguish'd prowess comes
To Pheres' mansion, by Eurystheus sent,
From Thracia's frozen regions, to convey
Those furious coursers harness'd to the car
Of Diomedes: in Admetus' house
With hospitable kindness entertain'd,
He from your grasp will forcibly redeem
This generous woman; and no thanks from me
Shall you obtain, yet grant what I request,
And still remain an object of my hate.

DEATH.

Much hast thou spoken, yet by many words
Thy purpose shalt not gain: to Pluto's realms
This woman must descend, I now to her
Am hastening, the initiatory rites
With this uplifted falchion to perform:
For they whose hair is sever'd by its blade
Are sacred to the Gods of Hell beneath. [*Exeunt.*

CHORUS.

SEMICHORUS I.

What means this general silence at the gate?
And from within Admetus' royal house,
Why sounds no voice?

SEMICHORUS II.

Is there no comrade near,
Who can inform us whether we must weep
For the decease of our illustrious Queen?
Or doth Alcestis Pelias' daughter live,
And still behold the Sun? by me, by all,
Esteem'd the best of Consorts to her Lord.

SEMICHORUS I.

Heard any one a groan? smite they their hands
Beneath yon princely roof, or issue forth
Such plaints as tho' the fatal hour were come?

SEMICHORUS II.

Not thus, nor is there station'd at the gate
A single servant.

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SEMICHORUS I.

'Midst these swelling waves
Of misery, come, O Pæan, to our aid.

SEMICHORUS II.

If she were dead, they would not have observ'd
So long a silence, neither can the corse,
Unseen by us, be from the palace borne.

SEMICHORUS I.

Whence learn'st thou this? I venture not to speak
With equal confidence. These sanguine hopes
What can suggest?

SEMICHORUS II.

How could Admetus lodge
By stealth, and unattended, in the grave
A wife so justly dear? (3) before the gates
Of the deceas'd, as custom hath ordain'd,
With waters from the limpid fountain drawn,
I see no laver fill'd, no tresses shorn
Are on the threshold scatter'd, as when tears
Stream for the dead, nor doth the blooming choir
Of virgins utter their shrill plaints.

SEMICHORUS I.

This day
Was by the Fates ordain'd——

SEMICHORUS II.

What means my friend?

(3) In most of the editions I have seen, the first Semichorus here begin their reply; but Lascaris makes no such distinction, and this rather seems to me a conclusion to the two preceding lines, and to come from the same speaker. Kuster thinks this passage of Euripides, of which he gives a citation in his note on the Ecclesiazusæ of Aristophanes, ver. 1035, was the source whence the latter derived

Θεσς τι κατοδυ πιστραιον πρ τς θυρας.

He proceeds to observe, that it was the custom anciently to place before the doors of the house in which any one lay dead, an earthen vessel filled with water, that they who went out might be purified by sprinkling themselves with it: this he further illustrates by a quotation from Julius Pollux, l. 8. segm. 65; in the residue of this dialogue I have followed the arrangement of Lascaris' and Dr. Musgrave's editions.

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SEMICHORUS I.

For her descent to the abodes beneath.

SEMICHORUS II.

You by these words my inmost vitals pierce.

CHORUS.

When the good suffer, they who from their youth
Have been reputed virtuous ought to grieve.

O D E.

I.

What tho' the bark to distant lands
Unfurl a prosperous sail,
Not (4) Ammon's fane on Afric's parching sands,
Not Lycia's oracles avail
To free her spirit from the realms of night:
Stern Fate draws near, and meditates the blow.
E'en where Heaven's altars flame with holier light
Each divine response hath ceas'd,
No longer now to any Priest
Desponding can I go.

II.

Liv'd Æsculapius Pæan's son,
On whom his sire bestow'd
The healing art, Alcestis might be won
From sullen Pluto's loath'd abode,

(4) "The temple of Ammon, or Jupiter Hammon, was in the deserts "of Libya; Quintus Curtius gives a copious account of it, in his history "of Alexander the Great, l. 4. c. 7. where he notices the barrenness of "those sands, and gives an excellent description of the oracle and its "situation: but what is said of those parts being destitute of water, "must be understood of the regions through which it was necessary to "travel: for the spot itself where the temple stood, abounded with "fountains, trees, and fruits. In regard to Apollo's Lycian oracles, the "following account of them is to be met with in the commentaries on "Virgil Æneid. l. 4. v. 143 and 345: they were delivered in the six win-"ter months in the city of Patara built near the mouth of the Xanthus, "where that river empties itself into the Mediterranean sea: in the "summer, Virgil says, the God visited this maternal Delos; where we "are to observe, that Diana occupied Dicté, in Crete, and Apollo Ly-"cia, and that they surrendered up Delos, where they were born, to "their mother Latona." BARNES.

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Those gates of darkness: for he rais'd the dead,
Brandish'd by Jove from yonder starry cope
Till winged light'ning smote the Sage's head.
But 'midst youth's bloom her life must end:
Its short duration to extend
How can I form a hope?

Nought hath our royal master left untried:
Abundant victims on each altar bleed:
Yet for these ills no cure is to be found.

ATTENDANT, CHORUS.

CHORUS.

But from the house a servant weeping comes!
What fresh event may I expect to hear?
If aught befall our rulers, to lament
Is sure excusable; yet would I know
Whether Alcestis breathe, or be no more.

ATTENDANT.

Both living you may call her and yet dead.

CHORUS.

How can the self-same person be at once
Living and dead?

ATTENDANT.

Stretch'd on a couch she lies
Just at her utmost gasp.

CHORUS.

My wretched Lord
Virtuous thyself, of what a virtuous wife
Art thou depriv'd!

ATTENDANT.

He knew not of the stroke
Before he felt it.

CHORUS.

Is there no hope left
Of saving her?

ATTENDANT.

The fatal hour impends.

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CHORUS.

How is each decent preparation manag'd?

ATTENDANT.

The ornaments in which her lord intends
To bury her, are ready.

CHORUS.

Be our Queen
Assur'd, that she shall die renown'd, the best
Of women, whom the sun's broad eye surveys.

ATTENDANT.

The best! who ventures to deny her worth?
Could aught have been done more by the most perfect
Of her whole sex, or how could any Wife
Have shewn a greater value for her Lord,
Than by thus dying for him? Our whole city
Already knows it. With amazement hear
In her apartment how she was employ'd.
When she perceiv'd the fatal morn was come,
She with the waters of the limpid rill
Lav'd her fair limbs, and from the sculptur'd chest
Of fragrant cedar each habiliment
Assorting, with a modest grace attir'd
Her person, and devoutly as she stood
Before her Lares in these terms implor'd
The aid of Vesta: "O thou aweful Queen,
"For on a journey to the realms beneath
"I now am bound: to thee with my last voice
"These orphan children to protect, I sue;
"With a lov'd Bride in Hymen's bonds unite
"My Son, and on this tender Maid bestow
"A noble Husband: nor, like her who bore them,
"Suffer my hapless progeny t' expire
"Thus immaturely: but by every bliss
"Accompanied, in their paternal land
"Permit them to fill up the lengthen'd measure
"Of a delicious life." To all the altars
Within Admetus' palace then she came,

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Deck'd them with garlands, offer'd up her vows
And from the branches of the myrtle stripp'd
Their foliage; yet meanwhile nor wept, nor groan'd,
Nor did the evil which was close at hand
Change the complexion of her blooming cheeks,
Till she at length into the chamber burst,
Fell on her couch, then stream'd the plenteous tear,
And she exclaim'd; "Thou inauspicious bed,
"On which the favour'd youth, for whom I die,
"Unbound my virgin zone, farewell, no hate
"To thee I bear, because thou hast destroy'd
"Me singly: for I perish through a dread
"Thee and my dearest Husband to betray:
"But thou by a new Bride, tho' not more chaste,
"Happier perchance than me, shalt be possess'd!"
Thus lay she, and oft kiss'd it till the couch
Was wholly with her gushing tears bedew'd;
Then satiated with weeping, started up,
And oft from her apartment issued forth,
Yet ever and anon did she return,
And throw herself again upon the couch.
Meantime the children on their Mother's robe
Hung weeping, but she rais'd them in her arms
As now aware of her impending death,
And kiss'd them oft, while thro' the palace wept,
Pitying their Mistress, the whole menial train;
With courtesy she held forth her right hand
To each, nor was there any one so mean
Whom she accosted not, or to whose words
She in her turn vouchsaf'd not to reply.
Such are the evils of Admetus' house,
By dying he had perish'd only once,
But now, from death escaping, is involv'd
In sorrows such as time can ne'er efface.

CHORUS.

Well may Admetus utter loudest groans
For such calamity, if adverse Fate

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Ordain that he his virtuous Wife shall lose.

ATTENDANT.

Shedding abundant tears, his arms he folds
Around his dearest Consort, and entreats
That she will not forsake him; but he sues
For what's impossible to be obtain'd:
With sickness withering she decays, her hands
Hang down a wretched load: yet scarce retaining
The breath of life, she wishes to behold
The radiant sun, whose beams, whose cheering orb
For the last time shall greet her longing eyes.
But I will go and tell her you are here.
Small is the number of the menial train
Who to their lords so firmly are attach'd
As to support them with unwearied zeal
When visited with anguish: but to those
I serve; you long have prov'd a stedfast friend.

CHORUS.

O Jove, what method is there to escape
These woes, and loose the bonds of adverse fortune
In which our honor'd rulers are involv'd?
Lo some one issues from the gate! my hair,
Say, shall I cut, and in a sable vest
These limbs array?

ATTENDANT *(returning.)*

Too plain, my friends, too plain
Is the event we fear'd: but let us pray
To Heaven, for in the Gods is vested power
That knows no bounds. Devise, O royal Pæan,
Some scheme by which Admetus may escape
His sorrows, and thy healing aid bestow,
Bestow as heretofore: for thy device
Erst sav'd our Lord, now, from the snares of death,
Thine, be it thine, to set his Consort free,
And baffle Pluto thirsting for her gore.

[*Exit* ATTENDANT.

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CHORUS.

Thou Son, alas, thou miserable Son
Of Pheres, what a very wretch art thou
Now from those arms thy virtuous Wife is torn!
Sufficient cause hast thou to slay thyself,
More than sufficient cause, alas! to twine
The gliding noose for thy devoted neck:
For on this very day must thou behold
The death of her who with no common love
Thy bosom fir'd. But she without the gate
E'en now comes forth, attended by her Lord.
Groan, O thou region of Pherea, groan,
Thine anguish with a clamorous voice express
For her, that best of women, who departs
Wasted with sickness to the world beneath
Where Pluto reigns. I never will affirm
That wedlock with it brings more joys than grief,
Contemplating the past, and now a witness
To these the present fortunes of our Lord,
Whose being will hereafter scarce deserve
The name of life, his matchless Consort lost.

ALCESTIS, ADMETUS, EUMELUS, CHORUS.

ALCESTIS.

O Sun, O thou resplendent light of day,
And ye O fleecy clouds with swift career
Whirl'd thro' the heavens!

ADMETUS.

Our sufferings they behold,
Altho' we have committed 'gainst the Gods
No sin, for which thou might'st deserve to die.

ALCESTIS.

Thou too, O Earth, ye roofs of stately domes,
And gay apartments which in bridal pomp
My native land Iolchos erst array'd.

ADMETUS.

Unhappy woman, from thy couch arise,

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Forsake me not; but to the Powers supreme
Sue for their pity.

ALCESTIS.

I behold the boat,
And him who ferries o'er the dead; he grasps
The pole: by Charon am I summon'd hence,
He cries; "What mean these fond delays? rouse, rouse,
"Thou stay'st behind when all things else are ready."
Thus eagerly he hastens my career.

ADMETUS.

The voyage which thou speak'st of is to me
Most bitter. Ah, how grievous are our woes!

ALCESTIS.

He leads me (see'st thou?) to yon hall of death:
'Tis winged Pluto who with glaring eyes
Darts horror. What art thou about? release me.
Thro' what strange paths most wretched am I borne.

ADMETUS.

By every friend, yet most of all, by me,
And these our offspring, partners in my grief,
Lamented.

ALCESTIS.

Loose me, loose me, lay me down,
I have no strength, grim Pluto is at hand,
And thickest night o'erspreads these eyes. My children,
Your Mother, O my children, is no more:
May ye with joy this radiant sun behold!

ADMETUS.

Ah me! the words I hear are to my soul
More grievous far than death in any form.
Forsake me not, I by the Gods implore
(5) And by our children, who of thee bereft
Will mourn their orphan state; but O resume

(5) The line μη προς παιδων ως ορφανας, though omitted in the preceding editions, here claims a place from being restored by Dr. Musgrave on the concurrent authorities of three manuscripts, and the interpretation of the Scholiast.

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Thy spirits: I no longer can exist
When thou art dead; on thee, on thee alone
Depends it, whether I yet live, or quit
This world; for thee I love and thee revere.

ALCESTIS.

To thee, Admetus, I my last behests
(Thou see'st my situation) ere I die
Wish to unfold: thro' my esteem for thee,
On whom in my own stead I have conferr'd
The privilege of life, I now expire;
Yet in my option was it to have shunn'd
The stroke of death, and, from the noblest youths
Of Thessaly selecting a new husband,
Dwelt in this palace, blest with regal power:
I would not hold my being on such terms
As being torn away from thee, and left
With these poor orphans: crown'd with (6) Hebe's gifts,
Fond pledges of delight, myself I spar'd not:
But thee the very Father who begot,
The Mother too that bore thee have betray'd,
Mature in age, when they to save their Son,
Might like heroic spirits have expir'd.
For thou wert all they had, nor could the hope
Of any farther issue, to replace
Thy loss, still harbour in their aged breasts.
Myself and thou might also hence have liv'd
The residue of our allotted time,

(6) Though the reading of Ηβης will not, I presume, strike the reader as being exceptionable in any other respect than its apparent want of authenticity, the substitution of Ηβης in its room, is what I have followed on account of its being established by Dr. Musgrave from the concurrence of all the manuscripts and the Lascaris' edition: he interprets it of the Goddess Hebe, whose gifts children may with propriety be called. The Doctor has, however, in his supplement, altered his way of thinking, and given a note of no inconsiderable length in defence of Ηβης: but facts are by far more forcible than mere opinions, and the former happily never undergo any change, while the latter are perpetually fluctuating.

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Nor would'st thou have bewail'd thy Consort's loss,
Without maternal aid constrain'd to rear
A brood of children. Yet are these events
By one of the immortal gods dispos'd.
I acquiesce: but let thy grateful soul
A memory of this favor still retain.
But I for no equivalent will ask,
Nor could there be discover'd aught, than life,
Of greater value: yet will thou confess
That it is just (for, if thou think aright,
The love thou bear'st these children equals mine)
In thee to make our race the future lords
Of these abodes, in which I now am Queen.
Nor subject to the step-dame's harsh controul
Our progeny, lest such a woman, sway'd
By principles less virtuous, should attempt
Against our offspring, thro' an envious rage,
Some deed of violence. Beware, my lord,
And act not thus, to thee I humbly sue:
For when the step-dame, an inveterate foe
To the first race, succeeds, she like the viper
Is merciless. As for the boy, he finds
A fortress to protect him, in his Sire,
With whom he oft the mutual converse holds:
But, O my Daughter, by what means canst thou
Be nurtur'd as illustrious virgins ought?
May not thy Sire be coupled to a Bride
Who, tainting with disgrace thy spotless name,
E'en in the bloom of youth, thy nuptial joys
Will frustrate? for no Mother shall preside
O'er thy espousals, nor midst child-birth's pangs
When the maternal tenderness exerts
Its utmost force, support thy drooping soul.
For I must die, nor is this ill postpon'd
E'en till to-morrow, nor the (7) moon's third day:

(7) It appears from this passage to have been customary among the Greeks for Creditors to allow some farther space for payment of their

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But in a moment, with the silent dead
Shall I be number'd. Fare ye well, take comfort:
Thou, O my Husband, hast sufficient cause
To boast thou didst possess the best of Wives,
Ye, too my Children, glory that ye sprung
From such a Mother.

CHORUS.

Courage: I for him
Dread not to answer, that he will perform
These thy requests, unless his reason fail.

ADMETUS.

They shall be executed, yes they shall:
Harbour no groundless fears, for thou thro' life
Hast been, and in the grave shalt still remain,
My only Consort; no Thessalian nymph
Shall in thy stead by the endearing name

debts beyond the expiration of their contract: from whence "the days "of grace," in relation to bills of exchange and drafts, probably derived their origin. The following passage in the Clouds of Aristophanes shews, that at Athens, in the time of Euripides, the interest of money was paid at the return of the moon.

Στρ. Ει μηκετ' αγελλοι σελην μηδαμου
Ουτ' αν γ' αποδουν τους τοκους.
Σωκ. Τη τι δη;
Στρ. Ο τη παλαι, μαλα γ' ορθως δοκουντα.

"STREPSIADES. If the *Moon*
"No where appear'd, no longer rising shone
"Upon the earth, then I too might retire
"Nor longer be oblig'd to pay for *Int'rest*."
"SOCRATES. As how?
"STREPSIADES. Because the payment of all *Int'rest*
"Is stipulated by the Moon's return." WHITE.

Thus we find by Salmasius, in his treatise de Fœnore Trapezitico, that the *centesima usura* among the antient Romans was one *per cent.* monthly. So difficult, however, is it for the commonly received text to find any exemption from the assaults of modern criticism, that Dr. Musgrave has not only objected to the word μηνος as seeing no reason for Euripides making use of it, but proposed νυκτος in its stead, and even gone so far as to new-model his Latin version suitably to that conjecture; for which he appears to have no authority whatever.

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Of Husband e'er accost me, tho' she spring
From an illustrious Father, and transcend
All other women in her graceful form.
Of Children I already have enough,
And pray the Gods that them I may enjoy,
Since all enjoyment I of thee have lost!
Nor shall my mourning to the usual space
Of one short year be limited, but last
Long as my life endures; e'en her who bore me
I loathe, and to my Father am a foe;
For they in empty words, and not in deeds,
Have been my friends: but thou, by yielding up
What mortals hold most dear, hast sav'd my life.
Have not I cause sufficient for these groans,
When of a Wife like thee I am bereft?
Henceforth, I from the banquet will abstain,
From social converse o'er the flowing bowl.
These brows no wreath shall crown, th' enlivening song
No longer echo thro' my vaulted roofs,
For I will never more attempt to touch
The sounding lyre, nor to the Libyan flute
Raise the symphonious warblings of my voice;
All the delights of life with thee are fled.
But, by the hand of skilful artists form'd,
Thy image shall be plac'd upon my couch,
That over thy resemblance while I bow,
And with these arms infold it, on thy name
Still calling, I my Wife may seem to clasp,
Tho' I in fact possess thee not: cold joys
I deem are these, yet thus may I alleviate
The burden which hangs heavy on my soul.
By visiting my dreams thou wilt delight me,
For it is grateful to see those we love
At any hour, e'en in the midnight gloom.
Had I the tongue and the melodious strains
Of Orpheus, could I, softening by my song

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Or Ceres' Daughter or her haughty Lord,
Redeem thee from the dreary shades beneath,
I thither would descend, nor should the Hound
Of Pluto, nor the ferryman of ghosts,
Unwearied Charon, who still plies the oar,
Prevent me, till I to the realms of light,
A living Consort, thee again had borne:
But wait thou there till the appointed time
Of my departure, and a house prepare,
For thou with me for ever shalt reside.
In the same cedar chest which shall contain
Thy body, I these servants will direct
Mine side by side to place: for e'en in death
From thee I would not part, since thou alone
To me hast faithful prov'd.

CHORUS.

I, like a friend
Who for his friend is interested, will share
Your griefs, for she deserves to be lamented.

ALCESTIS.

My Children, ye have heard your Sire profess
That he will never take a second Wife
To tyrannize o'er you, or shame my memory.

ADMETUS.

This promise I repeat, and will perform.

ALCESTIS.

On such condition, at my hands receive
Our Children.

ADMETUS.

These dear pledges I accept,
By that dear hand entrusted to my care.

ALCESTIS.

Be thou to them a Mother in my stead.

ADMETUS.

This sad behest, when thou art torn away,
It greatly doth import me to fulfill.

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ALCESTIS.

I, O my Children, to the shades descend
When my life most was needed.

ADMETUS.

What resource,
Alas, have I, when thus of thee bereft?

ALCESTIS.

Time will assuage thy sorrows: but the dead
Sink into nothing.

ADMETUS.

Take me, by the Gods,
Take, I entreat thee, to the realms beneath.

ALCESTIS.

Sufficient is it that I die to save thee.

ADMETUS.

Of what a virtuous Wife, O ruthless Fate,
Art thou depriving me!

ALCESTIS.

Thick darkness hangs
Upon these eyelids with a leaden weight.

ADMETUS.

I utterly am lost, if thou should'st leave me.

ALCESTIS.

Well may'st thou call me now a thing of nought,
As ceasing to exist.

ADMETUS.

Look up, nor quit
Thy children.

ALCESTIS.

'Tis not with my own consent,
But I to them must bid a long adieu.

ADMETUS.

Cast but one look upon them, one kind look.

ALCESTIS.

To very nothing now am I reduc'd.

ADMETUS.

What mean'st thou? wilt thou leave me thus?

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ALCESTIS.

Farewell! [*She dies.*

ADMETUS.

Wretch that I am! I perish.

CHORUS.

There she died;
The Consort of Admetus is no more.

EUMELUS.

I.

Woe is me! my Mother's gone
Down to the banks of Acheron;
For her, th' auspicious orb of day
No more its radiance shall display:
Her life to fate hath she resign'd,
And me an orphan leaves behind.
The lustre of those eyes behold
Extinct, those hands unnerv'd and cold.
O Mother, listen to my prayer
Nor let these vows be lost in air;
Thy tender son, 'tis I that speak
Imprinting kisses on thy cheek.

ADMETUS.

On her thou call'st who neither hears thy voice
Nor sees thy tears: both I and you, my Children,
Are smitten by the ponderous arm of Fate.

EUMELUS.

II.

Of maternal care bereft,
I, O my Sire, in youth am left:
O how severe, how past all cure
Are the afflictions I endure!
You, O my Sister, also bear
In this calamity a share.
My Father, thou in vain, in vain,
The best of Consorts didst obtain,
Nor to the goal of age hast led,
For she is prematurely dead:

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And, O my dearest Mother, all
This ruin'd house partakes thy fall.

CHORUS.

These are misfortunes which we must support
With firmness, O Admetus: for 'mong men
You are not first, nor yet shall you be last,
To lose a virtuous Consort; be assur'd
That death's a debt exacted from us all.

ADMETUS.

Of this am I aware, nor hither took
Such ill a sudden flight; with anguish long
Its coming I foresaw, but (since the corse
Must be with due solemnity borne forth)
Fixt on the spot where now ye stand, commence
In your alternate notes a choral strain
To Pluto, that inexorable God.
Let all my subjects, the Thessalian race,
Their tresses shorn and clad in sable vest,
Honor with public grief this matchless Dame:
And ye who either harness to the car,
Or mount the rapid courser, with sharp steel
Cut (8) off their flowing manes: for twelve whole moons
Let neither flute nor lyre's harmonious sound
Be thro' the city heard, for no one else
To me more dear, or by superior worth
Claiming my gratitude, can I inter:
From me the greatest honor she deserves,
For she alone hath in my stead expir'd.

[*Exeunt* ADMETUS *and* RUMELUS.

(8) "Herodotus relates that the Persians upon hearing of the slaughter "of Masistius shore themselves and their horses and beasts of burden; "the same Author in another place mentions this being done by Mardo- "nius himself the general of Xerxes's troops, when under affliction. It "is also mentioned by Plutarch that Alexander the Great had his horses "shorn at the funeral solemnity of Hephæstion, and the Thebans on the "death of Pelopidas. See Kirchmannus on the Funerals of the Ro- "mans, L. ii. c. 14." BARNES.

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CHORUS.

O D E.

I. 1.

Daughter of Pelias, doom'd by fate to dwell
In Pluto's loath'd abode, that vale
Where the sun darts no cheering beams, all hail!
Inform the swarthy God of Hell,
And that old Ferryman who plies the oar,
Maintaining ever at the leaky helm
His station, and to Orcus' realm
Conveys the dead; on Acheron's bleak shore
He now hath landed her who did her sex excell.

I. 2.

For thee shall oft the votaries of the Muse
To plaintive sounds attune the lyre,
Long shall thy praises fill the vocal choir,
When Sparta's vernal moon renews,
As in meridian lustre thro' the skies,
It glides, that feast (9) from Carnus which its name
Derives, and as a tribute to thy fame

(9) The accounts of Carnus which we meet with in Pausanias are, that he was the son of Jupiter and Europa; for his education he was indebted to Latona and Apollo, from whom he received the gift of divination: Carnus being slain, Hippotes the murderer fled; but Apollo wreaked his vengeance by sending a pestilential disorder into the camp of the Dorians, who instituted solemn expiatory rites, in which they paid joint homage to the Prophet and the God, who thence received the appellation of Carnean Apollo; the Carnus of the Lacedæmonians he considers as a different person, and says that divine honors were performed to him in the house of Crius the Seer, while the Achaians were yet in possession of Sparta. Apollodorus supplies some defects in the above history, and according to him, Carnus (the name indeed is not mentioned in the text, he being only called a Prophet), having appeared to the Heraclidæ when they sailed from the haven of Naupactus in Ætolia under the command of Temenus the son of Aristodemas, and foretold to them future events, which we must infer to have been of a very unacceptable nature, they considered him as a magician, and Hippotes the great grandson of Hercules ran him through with a lance. Not long after this

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Shall clouds of incense at blest Athens rise;
Thy death, a noble theme, each future Bard shall choose.

II. 1.

Would I had power thee from the shades to save,
And to the solar light restore,
To guide the bark again with Charon's oar
Across Cocytus' muddy wave.
O best of women, in thy Husband's stead
Hast thou, and thou alone, endur'd to die,
On thee may the turf lightly lie;
If a new Wife partake Admetus' bed,
Mine and thy Children's hate shall tend him to the grave.

II. 2.

Mother nor aged Father would descend,
On his behalf, the dreary tomb,
Their Son to rescue from th' infernal gloom,
Hence their grey hairs doth shame attend.
But while thy cheeks with vernal roses glow,
For thy young Lord thou quitt'st this blest domain.
If such a Consort I obtain
(These portions life full rarely doth bestow)
Our days from sorrow free together shall we spend.

HERCULES, CHORUS.

HERCULES.

Tribes of Pheræa, Strangers, shall I find
Admetus in the palace?

CHORUS.

Pheres' son

event, Lacedæmon, with the rest of the Peloponesus, became subject to the Heraclidæ. The festival here mentioned was annually celebrated with games which lasted nine successive days in the month of April, and according to Athenæus was first instituted in Sparta so late as the twenty-sixth Olympiad. From the combined testimony of these authors, though not perfectly according with each other, it results that the institution of the Carneian feasts must have been much later than the times of Hercules and Admetus, and that therefore it is not without an obvious degree of impropriety that mention is made of them in this Ode.

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Is here within, O Hercules. But say
What errand brings you to Thessalia's land,
Or why you visit these Pheræan walls?

HERCULES.

I, by Eurystheus the (10) Tirynthian king
Enjoin'd, a certain labor must perform.

CHORUS.

But whither would you go, and in what realm
Are you prepar'd to wander?

HERCULES.

The four steeds
Of Thracian Diomedes I must win.

CHORUS.

How can you execute this bold emprise?
Are you a stranger to that Tyrant's might?

HERCULES.

I am a stranger: the Bistonian land
These feet have never enter'd.

CHORUS.

You those coursers
Without a combat cannot tame.

HERCULES

From labors,

[10] The city of Tirynthia appears to have been not far distant from Argos, with whose troops those it furnished for the Trojan war, are united by Homer, who calls it Τειχιοεσσαν, or "strongly fortified." It became an independent state under Prætus, who, being driven from Argos by his brother Acrisius, was assisted by the Cyclops in erecting bulwarks and a citadel for its defence. In this account Strabo, Apollodorus, and Pausanias, all accord. The latter of these writers mentions the demolition of Tirynthia by the Argives, and speaks of its ruins as consisting of stones of a most enormous size; but in Pliny's time there seems to have been no traces of its situation remaining, for he represents it as known only by tradition. There is room to infer that Tirynthia stood either on the sea coast or the banks of the Inachus, which is the only river of any consequence we meet with in that part of the Peloponesus, from Stephanus Byzantinus saying it was called Αλιας, Halies, from the multitude of fishermen who inhabited it, till it received the name of Tirynthe from the sister of Amphitryon.

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Whate'er they are, yet cannot I recoil.

CHORUS.

You either will return when you have slain
Their master, or a breathless corse there lie.

HERCULES.

Nor am I now to run my first career.

CHORUS.

What will you gain if you their Lord subdue?

HERCULES.

Those captive steeds to the Tirynthian King
I mean to drive.

CHORUS.

Within their mouths to fix
The galling bit, were not an easy task.

HERCULES.

Unless they from their nostrils breathe forth fire.

CHORUS.

But with rapacious jaws on human flesh
They prey.

HERCULES.

Such food as this, to beasts who haunt
The mountains, not to horses, doth belong.

CHORUS.

Sprinkled with gore their mangers will you view.

HERCULES.

As for the man by whom they have been nourished,
What Father doth he boast of?

CHORUS.

Mars: and reigns
O'er Thrace distinguish'd by its golden shields.

HERCULES.

The labor too thou speak'st of, have the Fates
Ordain'd; them ever have I found severe,
And to the pinnacle of high renown
Urging my steps. I sure am doom'd to war
With all the valiant progeny of Mars,

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(11) Lycaon first, then Cygnus, and advance
To this my third encounter with those steeds
And with their Lord. But none shall ever see
Alcmena's offspring tremble at the might
Of any foe.

CHORUS.

Behold Admetus' self,
King of this land, forth from his palace comes,

ADMETUS, HERCULES, CHORUS.

ADMETUS.

Hail, Son of Jove, from noble Perseus sprung.

HERCULES.

Joy to thee too, Admetus, O thou ruler
Of the Thessalians!

ADMETUS.

Would to Heaven—! I know
Your kind intentions.

HERCULES.

Whence by tresses shorn
Art thou distinguish'd in such mournful guise?

ADMETUS.

This day I must inter a corse.

HERCULES.

Heaven ward
The mischief from thy children!

ADMETUS.

Those I had
Are living in the palace.

HERCULES.

But thy Sire,
Mature in years, perhaps is now no more.

ADMETUS.

He and my Mother, O Alcides, live.

(11) The Lycaon killed by Hercules was a son of Neleus and brother to Nestor. He had Neptune and not Mars for his grandfather.

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HERCULES.

Is then thy Wife, thy lov'd Alcestis, dead?

ADMETUS.

Of her I in a twofold strain may speak.

HERCULES.

By this thy language would'st thou mark her out
As dead or living?

ADMETUS.

She at once both is,
And is no more: this grieves my soul.

HERCULES.

Thou speak'st
Obscurely, and I know not what thou mean'st.

ADMETUS.

To her impending fate are you a stranger?

HERCULES.

I know she promis'd in thy stead to die.

ADMETUS.

How then is she yet living, if engag'd
By such a compact?

HERCULES.

Weep not for thy Wife
Before the time, but stay still she expire.

ADMETUS.

Whoever breathes his last may be term'd dead,
And to be dead is to exist no more.

HERCULES.

Yet hold we that to be or not to be
Is different.

ADMETUS.

Thus, O Hercules, you judge;
But I think otherwise.

HERCULES.

What cause hast thou
For tears, or who of those thou lov'st is dead?

ADMETUS.

A woman: we just now have been conversing
About a woman.

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HERCULES.

Was that (12) woman born
In foreign regions, or to thee allied
By ties of blood?

ADMETUS.

She, in a foreign land
Tho' born, yet was a necessary inmate
Of these abodes.

HERCULES.

How lost she then her life
Beneath thy roofs?

ADMETUS.

Her Father being dead,
The orphan here was train'd.

HERCULES.

I could have wish'd
To find Admetus by no sorrow vext.

ADMETUS.

With what design have you compos'd this speech?

HERCULES.

Hence to the social hearth of other hosts
Will I proceed.

ADMETUS.

You must not: may the Gods,

(12) Both of these alternatives might have been answered by Admetus in the affirmative. Alcestis, born at Iolchos in Thessaly, was nearly related to him before their marriage, for Admetus and she descended from the same grandmother. Salmoneus (one of the sons of Æolus), who was smitten for his impiety by Jupiter with thunderbolts, left a daughter named Tyro; she married Cretheus her father's brother, by whom she had three sons, Æson, Amychaon, and Pheres, the father of Admetus, to whom Pelias the father of Alcestis was brother by the mother's side. Tyro having borne him and Neleus father of Nestor to the God Neptune before her marriage. Apollodorus, Pausanias, and Diodorus Siculus, all concur in acquitting Alcestis of having been concerned with her sisters in the death of their father, whose being killed and cut in pieces by them, is more than once mentioned in the Medea of our Author: they were induced by that Sorceress to commit the detestable parricide, from an expectation that they could render him young again by boiling his limbs in a caldron.

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My noble friend, avert so great a curse!

HERCULES.

To the afflicted, if a stranger comes
He gives fresh trouble.

ADMETUS.

As for the deceas'd,
To nature their last tribute they have paid:
But enter these abodes.

HERCULES.

Beneath the roof
Of those who mourn, to banquet were unseemly.

ADMETUS.

There are detach'd apartments for our guests;
To these we will conduct you.

HERCULES.

Suffer me
Hence to depart, and I with grateful soul
The kindness will retain.

ADMETUS.

You must not go
To any other mansion. Lead the way,
Open those chambers most remote from view,
And them who in such office are employ'd
Bid furnish plenteous viands: close the doors
Which separate those apartments; for unseemly
Is it that they who feast should hear our groans,
Or strangers be made sad. [*Exit* HERCULES.

CHORUS.

What means my Lord?
By such severe calamity oppress'd
Can you find heart, Admetus, to receive
This visitant? have you your reason lost?

ADMETUS.

If from my hearth and city I had driven,
On his arrival, an illustrious guest,
Would'st thou such conduct rather have applauded?
I know thou could'st not: for my adverse fate

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Still undiminish'd would have then remain'd,
While I was breaking through the sacred laws
Of hospitality, and to the load
Of this my present woe, another woe
Would have been added, and this house have gain'd
The title of unfriendly to its guest:
In him too the most generous host I find
Whene'er I tread the parching Argive soil.

CHORUS.

Why then do you conceal the present woe,
When such a friend as he of whom you speak
Arrives just at the crisis?

ADMETUS.

On no terms
Would he the house have enter'd, had he known
Aught of my ills: there are to whom I fear
That I in acting thus shall seem unwise,
Nor worthy of their praise: but my abodes
Have never yet known how, or to repell
Or treat the stranger with unseemly scorn.

CHORUS.

O D E.

I. 1.

Health to Pherea's hospitable dome:
Fair Liberality here fix'd her seat,
(13) Apollo deign'd to make these walls his home;
Th' immortal Pythian Bard, in this retreat

(13) The following remark on Milton's Mansus occurs in a note to the Rev. Mr. Thomas Warton's edition of his smaller Poems, p. 556; "it has "never been observed that the whole context is a manifest imitation of a "sublime Chorus in the Alcestis of Milton's favorite Greek dramatist Eu-"ripides." It may not be unacceptable to the reader if I subjoin the whole passage:

"At non sponte domum tamen idem & regis adivit
"Rura Pheretiadæ cœlo fugitivus Apollo;
"Ille licet magnum Alciden susceperat hospes;
"Tantum ubi clausos placuit vitare labulcos,

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Content to feed the flock, attun'd his lyre;
Each winding valley rung,
As to the sportive herds he sung
Notes in each breast awakening soft desire.

I. 2.

Innoxious did the spotted lynxes rove
In social bands, delighted with his strain,
And tawny lions from Othrys's grove
Descending, wanton'd o'er the vernal plain;
Soon as thy harp, O Phœbus, gave the sound,
The fawn, with nimble leap
High bounding o'er the pine-clad steep,
In the brisk notes exulting danc'd around.

II. 1.

Hence with unnumber'd sheep the pasture teems,
Adown yon slope the yellow harvest bends,
Where Bæbia's lake receives translucent streams,
And o'er the West a prospect wide extends,
Molossian realms appear Admetus' own;
Close to th' Ægean wave,
Whose dangerous coast the sailors brave,
Steep Pelion bows in homage to his throne.

II. 2.

But now, the tear just starting from his eye,
He op'd those portals to receive the guest,
Though green in death his dearest Consort lie;
For noblest feelings sway th' ingenuous breast.

" Nobile mansueti cessit Chironis in antrum,
" Irriguos inter saltus, frondosaque tecta,
" Peneium prope rivum: ibi sæpe sub ilice nigrâ
" Ad citharæ strepitum, blanda prece victus amici,
" Exilii duros lenibat voce labores.
" Tum neque ripa suo, barathro nec fixa sub imo
" Saxa stetere loco; nutat arachinia rupes,
" Nec sentit solitas, immania pondera, silvas;
" Emotæque suis properant de collibus orni,
" Mulcenturque novo maculosi carmine lynces." v. 56—69.

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The truest wisdom is an honest heart.
With confidence I feel
This maxim all my sorrows heal;
" Heaven to the good each blessing shall impart."

ADMETUS.

O ye Pheræans, whom your duteous zeal
Assembles here, my servants bear the corse
To its interment, and the kindled pyre.
But on your part, as custom hath ordain'd,
Accost in plaintive notes your breathless Queen,
Who journeys to that land whence none return.

CHORUS.

Your Father I behold with aged step
Advancing: in their hands his followers bring,
Rich gifts your breathless Consort to adorn.

PHERES, ADMETUS, CHORUS.

PHERES.

In your afflictions, O my Son, I come
To sympathise; for no man can deny
Your having lost the best and most discreet
Of all her sex: yet such distress, though hard
To bear, we must endure. O take these robes,
And to the ground her lov'd remains consign,
For each funereal honour is the due
Of her who dying from the grave redeem'd
My dearest Son, not suffer'd me, forlorn
And childless, to consume the dregs of life
In hopeless sorrow. Thus to her whole sex,
By this one generous action, hath she made
Her life a pattern of heroic worth.
Thou who didst save my Son, and from the dust
Raise us in our fallen state, farewell (14): may bliss

(14) " Here Euripides acknowledges the immortality of the soul: for " thus doth St. Isiodore of Pelusium quote this passage. L. iv. Epist. " 125. But how hath Euripides, whom ye deem wise, said, Κδν Ἅιδου δόμοις ω σὺ γενοῦ." BARNES.

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In Pluto's mansions wait thee. I pronounce
Such nuptials advantageous to mankind,
Else were it best to shun the bridal yoke.

ADMETUS.

Uncall'd by me, on this funereal rite
Hast thou intruded; I thy presence hold
No mark of friendship: in the costly robes
Thou bring'st, my Wife shall never be array'd:
Nor at her burial need we aught of thine.
There was a proper season for thy griefs,
When thou beheld'st me on the verge of death.
Wilt thou, who could'st ignobly stand aloof
Though far advanc'd into the vale of years,
And leave a blooming victim to expire,
Wail o'er her corse? no real Father thou,
Nor she, the source whence I deriv'd my birth,
Who hath assum'd a Mother's honour'd name:
Sprung from some servile blood, no doubt, by stealth
I at the bosom of thy Wife was plac'd.
Soon as thou cam'st to so severe a test,
Hast thou shewn what thou art, nor can I think
That I am truly thine, for if I am,
Thou all mankind in cowardice exceed'st.
When thou wert grown thus old, and had'st attain'd
This lengthen'd period of thy life, nor will
Nor courage had'st thou, in thy Son's behalf
To lay it down, altho' ye meanly left
This foreign Dame, whom henceforth I instead
Of Mother and of Father shall revere,
To perish by th' untimely stroke of Fate.
Dying to save thy offspring, an exploit
Worthy of lasting fame hadst thou perform'd,
For short was the remainder of the space
Thou hadst to live: and hence, till nature close
The evening of our days, had we enjoy'd
A state of blest existence, nor depriv'd
Of this lov'd Wife, my sorrows had I wail'd.

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And sure the utmost share of happiness
Which mortals can attain to hath been thine;
In youth a regal sceptre fill'd thy hand,
And I, thy Son, was heir to these domains,
Thou, therefore, hadst not any ground for fear,
Lest, by expiring childless, thou this house
Should'st to a stranger's wasteful rapine leave.
Thou canst not urge, that thou didst yield me up
To death, because I slighted thy old age;
For I to thee have ever been most duteous;
And thus is filial tenderness repaid
By thee and by my Mother. Go, beget
New Sons to nourish thy decrepid years,
Adorn thy grave with due funereal pomp,
And stretch forth thy remains: for by these hands
Thou ne'er shalt be interr'd. Untimely fate,
Far as on thee depended, was my lot.
But if I view the light, by having found
Another kind deliverer, I, his Son,
Gladly pronounce myself; in drooping age
Him will I nourish. With unmeaning prayers
Do aged men court Death, when they complain
That they are old, and that life's space is long:
But, if pale Death draw near, their wishes change,
And they the weight of years no longer feel.

CHORUS.

Cease your contention: for the present ill
More than suffices. O impetuous Youth,
Forbear to irritate your Father's soul.

PHERES.

What arrogance of speech is this, my Son?
Think you these taunts wreak'd on some Lydian slave
Or purchas'd Phrygian? are you not appriz'd
That I, with native freedom blest, was born
In Thessaly, of a Thessalian Sire?
Having assail'd me with contemptuous words,
Such as by youthful rashness are inspir'd,

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Not thus shall you escape. I to a lord
Who these domains shall rule, in you gave birth
And nurture, as in duty I was bound,
But not for you to cast my life away.
For I from my progenitors receiv'd
No law enjoining Fathers to expire
In their Sons' stead, nor is such usage known
Among the Grecian states. You for yourself,
Wretched or blest, were born: but all that's due
To you from me already you possess;
For you bear rule o'er many, and these fields,
These spacious fields which erst I from my Sire
Inherited, to you will I bequeath.
How have I wrong'd, of what do I deprive you?
Nor die to rescue me, nor in your stead
Will I expire. Do you survey the light
With joy, and think you not your Father feels
The same delight? a tedious length of time,
I deem, we sojourn in the realms beneath:
But life, though short, is sweet: you to prolong
Its space have struggled, lost to virtuous shame,
And, having slain Alcestis, still exist
Beyond that period which the Fates ordain'd.
Me with a want of courage then you charge,
Vile dastard, and outdone e'en by this Woman
Who died for you, O most egregious youth.
But you this scheme have craftily invented,
That you may never die, on each new Wife,
If as your substitute, you can prevail
Still to become a sacrifice. Your friends
Meantime with foul reproaches you insult,
Because they will not, through spontaneous zeal,
Act that heroic generous part you dread
E'en to attempt. Be silent, and reflect,
That if you love to live, that love 's as strong
In other breasts: but with injurious taunts
If me you vex, you in return shall hear

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Nor few nor yet fictitious crimes alleg'd
Against yourself.

CHORUS.

Too many bitter words
Have on both sides been utter'd. But desist,
Thou hoary Father, nor revile thy Son.

ADMETUS.

With freedom speak as I do; but if truth
Seem grievous, when its harsher sounds thou hear'st,
Me, without cause, thou should'st not thus offend.

PHERES.

Dying for you, I sure had greatly err'd.

ADMETUS.

Is it the same whether a man expire
In youthful prime, or bow'd by palsied age?

PHERES.

To mortals one short life alone belongs.

ADMETUS.

O may thy years outnumber those of Jove!

PHERES.

Mean you to breathe forth curses 'gainst your Parents,
By whom you are not wrong'd?

ADMETUS.

Because I see
Long life is what thou doat'st on.

PHERES.

In your stead
Is not this corse to its interment borne?

ADMETUS.

Hence more conspicuous is thy abject soul,
Thou worst of dastards.

PHERES.

I had no concern
In her decease, this cannot you allege.

ADMETUS.

Of me may'st thou hereafter stand in need.

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PHERES.

Multiply wives, that others may expire
On your behalf.

ADMETUS.

This covers thee with shame;
Thou didst refuse to die.

PHERES.

These radiant beams
Which the (15) God scatters, we all hold most dear.

ADMETUS.

Thy abject soul, on man reflects disgrace.

PHERES.

Would you not laugh at bearing forth the corse
Of me your aged father?

ADMETUS.

Thy decease,
Come when it will, must ever be inglorious.

PHERES.

Your censures in the grave I shall not heed.

ADMETUS.

Alas! alas! how is old age devoid
Of modesty?

PHERES.

Alcestis, I allow,
Was not immodest; but you found her mad.

ADMETUS.

Depart, and let me bury her remains.

PHERES.

I go: do you, who are her murderer, see
To the funereal rites: for on your head,
No doubt, her injur'd kindred will inflict

(15) "That is to say, Phœbus, who when spoken of as the Sun is frequently marked out in antient writers, without any other distinction, as "the God" by way of eminence: thus Dei annus "the year of the God" in Censorinus: and in Homer, you read of the island of the Sun,

"Θεου ες αμιμονα νησον ικωμαι". Odyss. L. xii. v. 261.

"We arriv'd at the celebrated island of the God." Dr. Morell.

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Dire vengeance. If Acastus be a man,
He will requite you for his sister's blood.

ADMETUS.

Thou, with thy execrable wife, avaunt,
And, destitute of children, tho' your son
Be living, both grow old as ye deserve:
For ye shall never enter the same doors
Where I reside: be gone. If any law
Allow'd my sending heralds to command thee
Ne'er to approach the mansions of our Sires,
Such interdict I surely had pronounc'd. [*Exit* PHERES.
But I my present sorrow must endure.
Let us then haste, and to the blazing pyre
Consign the corse.

CHORUS.

Unhappy, generous, brave,
Most excellent of all thy sex, farewell.
Thee may those guardians of the realms beneath
Hermes and Pluto, courteously receive:
For in those drear abodes, if honor wait
On virtue, thou an ample share wilt find,
And take thy seat beside the Stygian Queen.

[*Exeunt* ADMETUS *and* CHORUS.

SERVANT.

To many strangers, and from various lands,
On their arrival at Admetus' house,
I well remember serving up the feast,
But never till this hour have introduc'd
So profligate a guest, who, though he saw
Our master sad, advancing dar'd to pass
The threshold, and without discretion took
All we presented, tho' he knew our griefs.
Moreover, were there aught we did not bring
He call'd for it: a goblet in his hands
With ivy wreath'd, uplifting, quaff'd the juice
Of the black grape unmingled, till his veins
Were heated with the flames of wine, and bound

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The sprays of verdant myrtle on his brow,
Filling the palace with a clamorous howl
Of dissonance: while twofold sounds were heard;
Regardless of Admetus' woes he sung,
And for our Mistress wail'd the menial train,
But to the stranger did not shew our eyes
Swimming with tears, for such injunction gave
Admetus. I e'en now perhaps bestow
This kind reception on some subtile thief,
Some robber: tho' our Mistress is borne forth
In slow funereal pomp, nor did I follow
The body, nor with lifted hands bewail
Her loss, who was to me and every servant
A mother: for she rescued us from ills
Unnumber'd, soothing oft her angry Lord.
Have I not cause sufficient to abhor
The guest, on our affliction who intrudes?

HERCULES, SERVANT.

HERCULES.

Ho! wherefore is thy aspect thus severe,
Thus thoughtful? a good servant it behoves
The stranger at his entrance to receive,
Not with a louring brow but courteous soul.
Yet in the presence of thy master's friend,
With that dejected visage, and that frown,
Art thou thus anxious for a foreign loss?
Come hither, learn of me to be more wise.
Art thou acquainted well with the affairs
Of mortals, know'st thou what their nature is?
Not thus I wist: for whence canst thou have gain'd
Such information? therefore hear my voice.
Death is a debt which all mankind must pay;
Not one among the human race foreknows
Whether he till to-morrow's sun arise
Shall yet be living: for in secret paths
Which we discern not, which the baffled craft

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Of mortals cannot trace, doth Fortune tread.
The doctrines I would teach thee, then, are these;
Divert thyself, the foaming goblet quaff,
Esteem to-day thine own, but all beyond
Subject to Fortune; gratefully revere
Venus, that loveliest of the Powers above,
For she's a Goddess affable and mild.
But casting off those other cares, observe
My counsels, if thou deem I speak aright,
As, that thou dost, I doubt not: from thy soul
Immoderate sorrow banishing, partake
The cheering draught with me, and o'er these ills
Victorious, form'd with interwoven flowers
Put on a wreath: for I am well assur'd
That the brisk motion of the mantling bowl,
The gloom dispelling which o'ershades thy brow,
And opening thy contracted heart, the bark,
Will, thro' the tempest, to its haven bring.
We, being men, ought therefore to adopt
Such notions as with human nature suit.
For, if they ask my judgement, ill deserves
The life of sages solemn and austere
To be call'd life, but one continued scene
Of misery rather.

SERVANT.

This full well we know:
But to our present fortunes are the banquet
And laughter ill adapted.

HERCULES.

The deceas'd
Was of another nation: curb thy grief;
For still the rulers of this mansion live.

SERVANT.

How! live they? you are uninform'd, it seems,
Of the calamities this house endures.

HERCULES.

Them, if thy lord deceiv'd me not, I know.

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SERVANT.

He pays too strict attention to the rites
Of hospitality.

HERCULES.

From such good cheer
Was I, because a foreigner lay dead,
Bound to debar myself?

SERVANT.

To these abodes
She closely, yes, too closely was ally'd.

HERCULES.

Hath some calamity befall'n my friend,
Of which he told me not?

SERVANT.

In peace depart:
Our lord's misfortunes interest us alone.

HERCULES.

This speech begins not with a foreign woe.

SERVANT.

If of that nature, I had not repin'd,
Seeing your banquet.

HERCULES.

Hath not then my host
Injur'd me horribly?

SERVANT.

You hither came
When we no fit reception could afford,
For we are plung'd in sorrow: tresses shorn,
And sable-tinctur'd garments you behold.

HERCULES.

But who is the deceas'd? hath he then lost
One of his children, or his aged Sire?

SERVANT.

Admetus' Wife, O stranger, is no more.

HERCULES.

What say'st thou? why did ye, when such mischance
Had just befallen, admit me as a guest?

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SERVANT.

Because he from these mansions could not bear
Churlishly to repell you.

HERCULES.

Wretched man,
Of what a virtuous Consort art thou reft!

SERVANT.

Not she alone by fate is torn away,
With her we perish all.

HERCULES.

I did observe
His weeping eyes, shorn head, and looks that spoke
Severe affliction: yet on me he wrought,
Pretending that he carried to the tomb
An alien's corse. I, with reluctance, pass'd
The threshold, and the foaming goblet drain'd
In the abodes of my unhappy host,
Regal'd myself, and cover'd o'er these brows
With garlands: but the fault on thee I charge,
Neglecting to inform me what great ill
Oppress'd this house. But where hath he interr'd
The body? Whither shall I go to find
Her sepulture?

SERVANT.

Close by the road which leads
Strait to (16) Larissa, you without the suburbs
Her monumental marble will behold.

HERCULES.

Now, O my heart, inur'd to many toils,
And thou, my enterprizing soul, give proof
How great a Son in me Tirynthia's fair

(16) There were two cities of the name of Larissa in Thessaly, situated on the opposite sides of Pherea, and it does not appear which of them is here meant; the one in the midland part of the country, on the banks of the river Peneus, was founded by Acrisius; the other called by Strabo and Livy χρεμαστη, on account of its being built upon hanging ground, was adjacent to the bay of Malea.

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Alcmena, Daughter of Electryon, bore
To Jove. For I this woman newly dead
Must save, and by establishing afresh
In these abodes, his dearest Wife, repay
Admetus' kindness: therefore will I go
In quest of Death, king of the shades, who flits
On sable wings, him I expect to find
As at the tomb he quaffs the victim's gore.
If rushing forth from ambush, by surprize
Him with these vigorous arms I can infold,
No power shall from captivity redeem,
Till he this Woman loose, the struggling God.
But, if I fail of seizing on this prey,
And he attend not at the hillock drench'd
With blood, I to that murky realm beneath
Which the Sun never visits, the abode
Of Proserpine and Pluto, will descend,
And my petition urge, with a firm trust
That to this upper world I shall convey,
And place again, Alcestis, in the arms
Of that kind host, who opening wide his doors
Receiv'd me for a guest, nor drove away,
Tho' deeply smitten by such grievous woe,
Which with a noble spirit he conceal'd,
Revering me. By what Thessalian chief
Are hospitable deeds like these surpass'd,
Or by what fam'd inhabitant of Greece?
This generous friend shall therefore never say
He on a worthless man his bounty shower'd. [*Exeunt.*

ADMETUS, CHORUS.

ADMETUS.

These widow'd mansions, loathing, I approach,
And with affliction view them. But, ah me!
Ah, whither shall I go, where stop, what speak,
Or what suppress, how end this hated life?
Me in an evil hour my Mother bore.

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Happy, thrice happy, I esteem the dead,
Them do I love, in their abodes would dwell.
Joyless I view the sun, on earth I tread
A wretch forlorn: such hostage torn away
Death in my stead on Pluto hath bestow'd.

CHORUS.

Advance a little farther, and retire
Within the palace.

ADMETUS.

Ah!

CHORUS.

What you endure
Deserves these plaints.

ADMETUS.

Woe! woe!

CHORUS.

Full well aware
Am I that the severest griefs assail you.

ADMETUS.

Alas! alas!

CHORUS.

To the deceas'd, your plaints
Are of no service.

ADMETUS.

Wretched, wretched me!

CHORUS.

That you must never more behold the face
Of that lov'd Consort is a grief indeed.

ADMETUS.

(17) Ye waken the remembrance of those pangs
Which harrow up my soul. What greater ill
Can be by man experienc'd than the loss

(17) "This hath a reference to the two immediately preceding speeches "of the Chorus. Thus is it related in Diogenes Laertius of Solon, that "when one said to him, "the weeping for your deceased son will be of "no avail to you:" he replied, "this is the very reason why I weep, "because my lamentations are of no avail." BARNES.

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Of such a faithful Consort? Would to Heaven
That I the nuptial state had never known,
Nor dwelt with her beneath these roofs! Th' unwedded
And childless, far more happy I esteem.
The griefs which on our own account we feel
Are burdens which with ease may be sustain'd:
But the severe diseases which assail
Our progeny, and wedlock's genial bed
When rifled by relentless Death, are sights
Intolerable to those who might have liv'd
Childless and strangers to the bridal yoke.

CHORUS.

Too strong to be resisted, cruel Fate
Invades us.

ADMETUS.

Ah!

CHORUS.

You set not any bound
To your afflictions.

ADMETUS.

Woe is me!

CHORUS.

Their load
Indeed is grievous; yet—

ADMETUS.

Wretch that I am!

CHORUS.

Endure them: nor are you the first whose loss—

ADMETUS.

Alas! alas!

CHORUS.

Hath been the Wife he lov'd:
For evil Fortune in a thousand shapes
Harrasses the devoted race of man.

ADMETUS.

O tedious sorrows, when the loss of friends

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Who sleep beneath earth's surface, we bewail.
Why didst thou hinder me from plunging down
Into the sepulchre, and with that best
Of women lying there a breathless corse?
Instead of one, had Pluto then possess'd
Two souls, distinguish'd by their mutual faith,
Across the Stygian lake together borne.

CHORUS.

I.

There was a kinsman erst of mine
Beneath whose roof his only Son,
Deserving of a father's tears,
To nature the last tribute paid:
Yet with much calmness he endur'd
This evil, tho' no child remain'd;
His hair already was grown grey,
And he himself with headlong speed
Advancing into life's decline.

ADMETUS.

Thou aspect of those mansions, ah! how chang'd!
How shall I enter them, how bear to dwell
With Fortune, that inconstant! for the diff'rence
Between my past and present state's immense.
Erst amid blazing torches of the pine
From Pelion hewn, and hymeneal songs
In festive pomp I enter'd these abodes
Clasping the hand of my dear Bride; our friends
Join'd the procession, and in choral strains
Term'd the deceas'd and me supremely blest,
Because we both were noble, and deriv'd
Our birth on either side from a long line
Of ancestry renown'd for virtuous deeds,
A pair well match'd: but now the voice of woe
Harsh, dissonant, and such as Hymen loathes,
And sable vests instead of snowy robes,
Usher my steps to a deserted bed.

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CHORUS.

II.

Midst prosperous fortunes sudden came
This ill on you, who ne'er before
Had known the chastening of distress.
Yet is your life preserv'd from fate:
Your Wife, expiring, leaves behind
Her much-lov'd lord. Can this seem strange?
Full many are there from whose arms
Death hath already torn away
The Consort whom they held most dear

ADMETUS.

My friends, altho' it seem not thus, I hold
The fate of the deceas'd more blest than mine:
For sorrow will on her have have no effect
Hereafter, and with glory is she freed
From many toils: but I, who have no right
To live beyond the bounds allow'd by fate,
Must practise a new lesson thro' constraint,
And drag a life of bitterness: for how
Can I endure to enter these abodes?
Whom shall I speak to, by what gentle voice
Accosted, cross the threshold with delight,
Or whither turn? The solitary scene
Within, will overcome me, when I see
A widow'd couch of my lov'd Wife depriv'd,
The vacant chair, on which she sat, and floors
Cover'd with dust; while groveling round my knees
Their Mother's death our helpless children wail,
And servants groan for such a mistress lost.
These are the sorrows I at home shall find:
Abroad, the brides of gay Thessalian lords,
And female choirs will (18) ridicule my grief:

(18) For the reading of γελωσι which I have followed, the edition of Lascaris and a Florentine manuscript, mentioned by Dr. Musgrave, are my authorities; it usually stands ἰλωσι agitabunt; but ἰλωσι enecabunt is

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For I shall not be able to endure
The sight of my deceas'd Alcestis' friends.
Then will my foes exclaim, "Observe that wretch
"O'erwhelm'd with infamy, who still lives on,
"Who wanted resolution to meet death,
"And, like a coward, yielding up his Wife,
"Escap'd the grave: yet after this vile deed
"Fancies himself a man, and hates his Parents,
"Although he hath refused to die." Such shame
I to my woes shall add. Why, O my friends,
Should I then wish to lengthen out a life
By foul reproach and misery thus assail'd?

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. 1.

Fir'd by my genius with sublimer views,
In Learning's stores I found delight;
Yet nought avail'd th' enchantments of the Muse
Against Necessity's superior might:
Such spells as guard mankind from that abhorr'd disease
In vain from Thracia's magic tablets sought,
By Orpheus' self remain untaught,
Nor can we number these
'Mongst antidotes which Pæan deign'd t' impart,
When Æsculapius' sons acquir'd the healing art.

I. 2.

The temple of Necessity alone
Admits no votary, ever clos'd,
No image of that Goddess e'er was known,
Still is she deaf though victims are expos'd.
With that unwonted horror glaring in thy mien
O come not now: for Jove by means of thee
Doth execute the strict decree
Which he hath pass'd: dread Queen,

the reading preferred by Heath and Musgrave in their notes, and the construction made use of in the Latin versions of Camillus and Buchanan.

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With nervous arm thou knapp'st the massive steel,
Nor can thy harden'd soul shame's gentler influence feel.

II. 1.

Thee, O Admetus, hath this Goddess caught,
Bound with inevitable chains;
Yet O despair not: for tears never wrought
Such wonders as again to earth's domains
Conducting the deceas'd from yon infernal shore.
They whom th' immortal Powers by stealth begot,
In the cold grave are doom'd to rot
When life's short day is o'er.
Belov'd while present, and in death still dear,
Thy matchless Wife this house for ever shall revere.

II. 2.

Deem not she sleeps like those devoid of fame
Unconscious in the lap of earth:
Such homage as the Gods from mortals claim
Each traveller shall pay her matchless worth;
Digressing from his road, and these bold thoughts, exprest
In no faint language, utter o'er her grave;
" She who expir'd her Lord to save,
" Resides among the blest.
" Hail, aweful Goddess, and this realm befriend."
To her their pious vows shall thus the skies ascend.

But, O Admetus, fam'd Alcmena's Son
Seems to direct his steps to your abode.

HERCULES, LEADING A WOMAN VEILED, ADMETUS, CHORUS.

HERCULES.

Our thoughts, with manly freedom to a friend,
Should we express, nor harbouring in the soul
Bitter reproofs, a cautious silence keep.
But when I in the midst of thy distress
Came hither, my attachment was, I deem'd,
Worthy of being tried: thou never said'st

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That she, who breathless in the palace lay,
Was thy Alcestis? but with courteous zeal,
Receiving me thy guest, didst seem concern'd
For nought beyond a stranger's loss. I wore
A chaplet, and libations to the Gods
Pour'd forth beneath thy inauspicious roof.
This treatment, therefore, I with justice blame;
Yet wish not to embitter thy distress.
The real motives now will I relate
Which bring me back again to these abodes.
To thy protection I entrust this Dame,
Till I return victorious with the steeds
Of Thrace, the spoils of slain Bistonia's King:
Should dire mischance befall me, (O ye Gods,
Avert that omen! speed the bold emprise!)
Her in thy house I for a servant give.
She by a multitude of toils at first
Came into my possession: for I found
Rich donors, to the champions who propos'd
Such terms of public conflict as demanded
The most heroic efforts. Her, the palm
Of conquest, I obtained, and bore away.
For to each victor light of foot, were given
Fleet coursers: they who with severer might
The cestus pois'd, or wrestled, won large herds
Of oxen; this fair (19) Damsel, to augment
The prize was added, and in me it sure
Would argue a base spirit to neglect
The glorious present Fortune hath bestow'd.
But I already have premis'd her claim

(19) In their arrangement of prizes at the games, and their mode of mingling female captives with other rewards, both Homer and Virgil have treated the Sex with full as great a want of respect as Euripides may be thought to have done, in saying that "The Woman was added to the Oxen."

Immediately before the commencement of the funeral games in honor of his friend Patroclus, Achilles brings forth prizes from the ships, and

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To thy attention, nor obtain'd by stealth
But honorable prowess hither bring.
My conduct haply thou at length wilt praise.

harangues them in the following manner, which is somewhat improved by his translator,

λέβητας τε, τρίποδας τε,
Ἵππους θ', ἡμιόνους τε, βοῶν τ' ἰφθίμα κάρηνα,
Ἠδὲ γυναῖκας εὐζώνους, πολλόν τε σίδηρον.

" A train of oxen, mules, and stately steeds,
" Vases and tripods for the fun'ral games,
" Resplendent brass, and more resplendent dames."

To the wrestlers he proposes,

Τῷ μὲν πεπρώτῳ, μέγαν τρίποδ' ἐμπυρόεντα,
Τῷ δὲ δυωδεκάβοιον ἐπ' ὀφρύσι τῖον Ἀχαιοί·
Ἀνδρὶ δὲ νικήσαντι γυναῖκ' ἐς μέσσον ἐθεῖραι
Πολλὰ δ' ἐπίστατο ἔργα· τῖον δὲ ἑ τετραβόειον.

" A massy tripod for the victor lies,
" Of twice six oxen its reputed price,
" And next, the losers spirits to restore,
" A female captive valued but at four," POPE.

In Virgil's ship race, after the victor and the two who came next in succession, had received an embroidered robe, a coat of mail, silver cups to drink out of, and brazen cauldrons: on Sergestus' reaching the shore, last of all,

Æneas promisso munere donat
Olli serva datur, operum haud ignara Minervæ,
Cressa genus Pholöe, geminique sub ubere nati.

" The *promis'd* present to the chief he gave;
" Pholoe the beauteous female Cretan slave,
" In works of art superior to the rest,
" And proud of two fair infants at the breast." PITT.

The bestowing any prize on Sergestus, who shattered his bark against a rock, and did not reach the port till after the distribution, may indeed be considered as an act of *generosity* in Æneas, but the term *promisso* munere shows, that before the race began, the competitors were informed what prizes they should receive, according to their coming in, first, second, third, or fourth, as in the foot race, which in Virgil immediately succeeds that of the galleys, and that of the chariots in Homer. This sufficiently obviates, on the one hand, La Cerda's quibble of homini imbelli datam in præmium fœminam; and, on the other, the idea of Catrou in regard to Sergestus being rather better rewarded than his adversary who had gained the start of him in the race, to comfort him in his misfortune.

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ADMETUS.

Not from contempt for you, or any want
Of due respect to her, did I conceal
My Consort's hapless fate, but grief to grief
Would have been added, with impetuous step
Had you retreated hence to the abodes
Of some fresh host: for me was it enough,
Those woes I now am suffering, to bewail.
But I entreat you, O my noble Friend,
If possible, consign the captive Dame
To some Thessalian lord, who ne'er endur'd
Such ills as I have done: for in Pheræa
Full many a courteous host would ope his doors
To great Alcides. O remind me not
Of my calamities: I, in this house,
Cannot behold her, yet abstain from tears.
On me whose sorrows are already great
Forbear to heap new sorrows; for the load
Which I endure already, may suffice.
Amid these mansions where shall I train up
This Nymph, whose dress bespeaks her tender years?
Within the men's apartments shall she dwell?
But how if with gay youths she here converse,
Will she a spotless purity retain?
Our headstrong passions, in the bloom of life,
O Hercules, it is no easy task
To conquer: for your sake I exercise
This forethought. Shall I rear her in the chambers
Of the deceas'd? but in Alcestis' bed
How can I place her? The reproach I fear
Is twofold; lest some citizen condemn
My falshood to my generous benefactress,
And rushing into this new Consort's arms:
Great is th' attention too that I should pay
To the decea.'d Alcestis, who deserves
From me much reverence. Whatsoe'er thou art,
O Woman, know, thy form, thy graceful mien,

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Resemble those of my departed Wife.
Ah me! remove, I by the Gods conjure you,
Remove that dangerous object from my sight,
Nor heap yet more destruction on the wretch
Who is destroy'd already. For methinks
In viewing her, I view my Wife: this heart
Is seiz'd with strong emotions; from these eyes
Fountains of tears gush forth: O wretched me,
How do I taste the bitterness of grief!

CHORUS.

Indeed I cannot term thy fortunes blest:
But thou, O man, whoe'er thou art, must learn
With patience to endure what Heaven decrees.

HERCULES.

Had I sufficient power to bring thy Wife
From those infernal mansions to the realms
Of day, such boon on thee I would confer.

ADMETUS.

Your will I know: but how can you effect
Such generous purpose? to this upper world
The dead can ne'er return.

HERCULES.

All bounds exceed not,
But under grief bear up with equal soul.

ADMETUS.

Others may comfort him, with greater ease
Than the poor sufferer can his fate sustain.

HERCULES.

But what could it avail, if thou thy groans
For ever should'st indulge?

ADMETUS.

Of this I too
Am well aware, but strong desire impells me.

HERCULES.

Love for the dead produces nought but tears.

ADMETUS.

Beyond what I am able to express
Her loss hath made me wretched.

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HERCULES.

Thou hast lost
(Who can deny it?) a most virtuous Wife.

ADMETUS.

Life hath for me no longer any charms.

HERCULES.

Time will assuage the smart: but now thy ills
Are recent.

ADMETUS.

What you speak of Time is true,
If you by Time intend the hour of death.

HERCULES.

Th' attractions of a lovely Bride will cause
Thy griefs to cease.

ADMETUS.

Be silent. What strange words
Are these? from you I ne'er could have expected—

HERCULES.

What! art thou then determin'd not to wed,
But lead a widower's solitary life?

ADMETUS.

No woman shall hereafter share my couch.

HERCULES.

Think'st thou that this can profit the deceas'd?

ADMETUS.

Where'er she be, my reverence she deserves.

HERCULES.

I in her praises join. But sure thou act'st
An Ideot's part.

ADMETUS.

You never shall accost
Me by the name of Bridegroom.

HERCULES.

I applaud
Thy conjugal fidelity.

ADMETUS.

May Death

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O'ertake me, tho' no longer she exist,
If I to her prove false!

HERCULES.

Into thy house
Now take this noble Damsel.

ADMETUS.

I, by Jove
Your Sire, entreat you, wave such strange request.

HERCULES.

If thou comply not, thou wilt greatly err.

ADMETUS.

But, if I yield, remorse will gnaw my heart.

HERCULES.

Submit: perhaps thou wilt have done a kindness
Most opportune.

ADMETUS.

Would you had never gain'd
This prize!

HERCULES.

To thee my triumphs appertain;
For with thy friend thou shar'st the victor's meed.

ADMETUS.

Most nobly have you spoken: but dismiss
The woman.

HERCULES.

If she must, she shall depart:
But whether this be necessary, first
Consider well.

ADMETUS.

It must be so, if you
Will not be angry with me.

HERCULES.

Well I know
The cause which in my breast excites this zeal.

ADMETUS.

Enjoy the triumph which you now obtain,
Though I your conduct cannot but dislike.

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HERCULES.

Hereafter shalt thou praise me; only yield.

ADMETUS TO THE CHORUS.

Attend her to the palace, if my doors
Must needs admit her.

HERCULES.

To thy servants' care
I will not trust her.

ADMETUS.

If you list, yourself
To her apartment lead the captive Dame.

HERCULES.

Into thy hands this pledge will I consign.

ADMETUS.

I will not introduce her: but this house
She with my leave may enter.

HERCULES.

Her to thee
Have I entrusted, and to thee alone.

ADMETUS.

Against my will you urge me to proceed.

HERCULES.

With courage take the stranger by her hand.

ADMETUS.

Horrors I feel, as if I were ordain'd
To grasp the newly sever'd Gorgon's head.

HERCULES.

Say, do'st thou hold her?

ADMETUS.

Yes I hold her fast.

HERCULES, *taking off the Veil.*

With care preserve her, and in future times
Thou wilt proclaim that he who sprung from Jove
Hath been a noble guest. Observe her face,
If it resemble thy departed Wife:
Blest as thou art, no longer grieve.

ADMETUS,

Ye Gods!

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What shall I say? a miracle like this
Was most unhop'd for. But do I indeed
Behold my Wife? or would some fraudful God
Surprize my senses with ideal joy?

HERCULES.

Not thus: in her thou view'st thy real Wife.

ADMETUS.

Look to it, lest this be some spectre sent
From the infernal regions.

HERCULES.

For thy guest,
Thou no vile (20) Sorcerer hast in me receiv'd.

(20) In the original the term which I have rendered Sorcerer is ψυχαγωγος, the literal interpretation of which is "one who calls forth "the souls of the dead." Barnes, Dr. Morell, and Dr. Musgrave, all concur in translating it præstigiator. The Scholiast speaks of Thessaly as renowned for these impostors, and refers us to Plutarch, who has much on the subject, particularly in his treatise "on those who are at length "overtaken by Divine vengeance," in the folio edition, Paris, 1624, V. II. p. 555, and 560; in the latter of these passages he says that "when the Spartans were ordered by the oracle to appease the soul of "Pausanias, Sorcerers sent for from *Italy*, having offered sacrifice, re-"moved the Apparition from the temple." So it seems the *honor* of producing these personages was not confined to any one particular country, and that they undertook to *lay* as well as *raise* Ghosts conformably to the example of Mercury,

Tum virgam capit: hac animas ille evocat Orco
Pallentes, alias sub tristia Tartara mittit.
Virgil Æn. L. iv. v. 242.

But first he grasps within his aweful hand,
The mark of sov'reign power, his magick wand:
With this he draws the Ghosts from hollow graves,
With this he drives them down the Stygian waves.
DRYDEN.

Aristophanes, who seizes every occasion of turning into ridicule the wisdom and virtues of Socrates, says of him in his Comedy of the Birds, v. 1552,

Προς δε τους Σκιαποδι λιμνη τις εστ' αλυτος, ω
Ψυχαγωγει Σωκρατης.

"but among the Sciapodes there is a certain impure lake where Socrates "calls forth souls from Hell." As the Sciapodes are a nation not easily

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AEMETUS.

But do I see that Consort I interr'd?

HERCULES.

The same, be well assur'd. I wonder not,
However, if thou still distrust thy fortune.

ADMETUS.

Her as my living Wife may I embrace,
May I accost?

HERCULES.

To her with freedom speak:
For thou thy utmost wishes hast obtain'd.

ADMETUS.

Ye well known features, and thou graceful form
Of my lov'd Consort! thee these arms infold
When I could ne'er have hop'd to see thee more.

HERCULES.

She now is thine; thro' envy may no God
Impair thy bliss!

ADMETUS.

Illustrious Son of Jove,
Be prosperous fortunes yours; and may that Sire
Protect you who begot; for you alone
Have re-establish'd me. But from the shades
How did you bring her to this upper world?

HERCULES.

By furiously encountering the stern King
Of disembodied ghosts.

ADMETUS.

'Twixt you and Death,
Where, say you, was this stubborn battle fought?

met with in Geographical writers, it may not be amiss to subjoin the account given of them by the Scholiast of Aristophanes, who derives their name from σκια a shadow, and πους a foot, and says they were situated on the shores of the Western ocean under the torrid zone, that the soles of their feet are said to be larger than their whole body; being destitute of houses, and exposed to the heat of the sun, they walk in the manner of beasts, and hold up one foot to skreen themselves.

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HERCULES.

From ambush at the tomb I sprung, and grasp'd
The Tyrant in my arms.

ADMETUS.

But why thus mute
Yet stands my Wife?

HERCULES.

Thou must not hear her voice
Till those sepulchral rites have been annull'd,
By which she to the Gods of Hell beneath
Was render'd sacred, and the radiant morn
For the third time arise. Conduct her steps
Into the royal mansion, and do thou,
Who art already eminently just,
Hereafter with the same benignant zeal
Treat strangers, O Admetus. Now farewell,
For I must go to execute those labors
(21) My King the Son of Sthenelus ordain'd.

ADMETUS.

With us prolong your stay, a welcome guest.

HERCULES.

I at a future season will return;
But now must I exert my utmost speed.

ADMETUS.

With victory by propitious fortune crown'd
At these abodes may you again arrive!
But I these mandates issue thro' our realm

(21) "The genealogy of Eurystheus is as follows; Perseus was the "son of Jupiter and Danae, Sthenelus of Perseus and Andromeda; "from Sthenelus and Archippe, or (as Apollodorus calls her), Nicippe, "sprung Eurystheus. When Hercules was on the point of being "born, Jupiter swore in the council of the Gods, that there should "that very day come into the world a descendant of Perseus who "should reign at Mycene. Upon which, Juno, through envy, pre-"vailed on Eilithya to delay the delivery of Alcmena, and cause the "wife of Sthenelus, who was only seven months gone with child, to "bear a Son." BARNES and APOLLODORUS.

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To citizen and (22) tetrarch, that with fea:
And choral dance this blest event they grace.
Let the rich incense on each altar rise
And oxen expiating victims bleed,
For now I to the haven of a life,
Better than what I knew before, have steer'd
My bark, and own myself a happy man.

CHORUS.

A thousand shapes our varying Fates assume,
The Gods perform what we could least expect,
And oft' the things for which we fondly hop'd
Come not to pass: but Heaven still finds a clue
To guide our steps through life's perplexing maze,
And thus doth this important business end.

(22) "The whole extent of Thessaly is divided into *four* parts. The "provinces of Phthia, Estræotis, Thessaliotis, or Thessalia Propria, "and Pelasgiotis." STRABO.

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ANDROMACHE.

Nos patriâ incensâ diversa per æquora vectæ
Stirpis Achilleæ fastus, juvenemque superbum
Servitio enixæ tulimus: qui deinde secutus,
Ledæam Hermionem, Lacedæmonioque hymenæos —,

VIRGIL.

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PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

ANDROMACHE.

ATTENDANT.

CHORUS OF PHTHIAN WOMEN.

HERMIONE.

MENELAUS.

MOLOSSUS.

PELEUS.

NURSE OF HERMIONE.

ORESTES.

MESSENGER.

THETIS.

SCENE—THE VESTIBULE OF THETIS' TEMPLE BETWEEN PHTHIA AND PHARSALIA IN THESSALY.

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ANDROMACHE.

ANDROMACHE.

O THEBES (1) thou pride of Asia, from whose gate
I came resplendent with a plenteous dower,
To Priam's regal house, the fruitful Wife
Of Hector: his Andromache was erst
An envied name: but now am I more wretched
Than any woman, or already born,
Or to be born hereafter; for I saw
My husband Hector by Achilles slain,
And that unhappy son whom to my lord
I bore, Astyanax, from Troy's high towers
Thrown headlong; when our foes had sack'd the city,
Myself descended from a noble line
Of freeborn warriors, reach'd the Grecian coast,
On Neoptolemus that (2) island prince
For the reward of his victorious arms
Bestow'd: selected from the Phrygian spoils.
'Twixt Phthia and Pharsalia, in these fields,
I dwell, where Thetis from the haunts of men

(1) The Thebes here spoken of is not the famous city of that name on the banks of the Nile called Hecatompylæ, from its hundred gates, which some readers may at first sight be induced to suppose from the antient Geographers having, as Cluverius observes, taken Egypt into Asia instead of Africa; but this, which stands fourth of the nine Thebeses, enumerated by Stephanus Byzantinus, was a Cilician city of inferior note, where reigned Aetion the father of Andromache; its destruction by the Grecian arms, Homer has repeatedly mentioned in the Iliad.

(2) Scyros, the place where Neoptolemus was born, a small and inconsiderable island in the Ægean sea (Σκυρον νδαμα πιθης. v. 209.) is here contemptuously alluded to: Achilles being convey'd thither by Thetis, disguised in female apparel, to prevent his going to the siege of Troy, had an amour with Deidamia daughter of Lycomedes king of the island, the fruit of which was Pyrrhus, (or as Euripides constantly calls him,) Neoptolemus.

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Retreating, with her Peleus erst abode.
By Thessaly's inhabitants, this spot
Is from th' auspicious nuptials of that Goddess
Call'd Thetidæum: here Achilles' son
Residing, suffers Peleus still to rule
Pharsalia's land, nor will assume the sceptre
While lives his aged grandsire. In these walls
A son, who to th' embraces of my lord
Achilles' offspring, owes his birth, I bore,
And tho' I had been wretched, a fond hope
Still cherish'd, that while yet the boy was safe
I some protection and relief might find
In my calamities; but since my lord
(Spurning my servile couch) that Spartan dame
Hermione espoused, with ruthless hate
By her am I pursued; for she pretends
That I, by drugs endued with magic power,
Administer'd in secret, make her barren
And odious to her lord, because I wish
To occupy this mansion in her stead,
And forcibly to drive her from his couch,
To which, at first I with reluctance came,
But now have left it: mighty Jove can witness
That I became the partner of his bed
Against my own consent. But she remains
Deaf to conviction, and attempts to slay me:
In this design her father Menelaus
Assists his daughter, he is now within,
And on such errand left the Spartan realm:
Fearing his rage, I near the palace take
My seat, in Thetis' temple, that the Goddess
From death may save me; for both Peleus' self,
And the descendants of that monarch, hold
This structure rear'd in memory of his wedlock
With the fair Nereid, in religious awe.
But hence, in secret, trembling for his life,
My only child have I convey'd away,

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Because his noble father is not present
To aid me, and avails not now to guard
His son, while absent in the Delphic land,
To expiate there the rage with which he sought
The Pythian tripod, and from Phœbus claim'd
A reparation for his Father's death.
If haply he can deprecate the curses
Attendant on his past misdeeds, and make
The God propitious to his future days.

FEMALE ATTENDANT, ANDROMACHE.

ATTENDANT.

My Queen, for still I scruple not to use
The same respectful title, which I gave you
When we in Ilion dwelt; you and your lord
While he was living, shar'd my duteous love,
And now I with important tidings fraught
To you am come, trembling indeed lest one
Of our new rulers overhear the tale,
Yet greatly pitying your disastrous fate;
For Menelaus and his Daughter form
Dire plots against you; of these foes beware.

HECUBA.

O my dear fellow-servant, (for thou shar'st
Her bondage who was erst thy Queen, but now
Is wretched,) ha! what mean they? what fresh schemes
Have they devis'd to take away my life,
Who am by woes encompass'd?

ATTENDANT.

They intend,
O miserable dame, to kill your son,
Whom privately you from this house convey'd.

HECUBA.

Are they inform'd I sent the child away?
Ah me! who told them? in what utter ruin
Am I involv'd!

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ATTENDANT.

I know not; but thus much
Of their designs I heard; in quest of him
Is Menelaus from these doors gone forth.

ANDROMACHE.

Then am I lost indeed: for, O my child,
These two relentless vultures mean to seize thee,
And take away thy life, while he who bears
A father's name, at Delphi still remains.

ATTENDANT.

You had not far'd so ill, I am convinc'd,
If he were present, but now every friend
Deserts you.

ANDROMACHE.

Is there not a rumour spread
Of Peleus' coming?

ATTENDANT.

He, tho' he were here,
Is grown too old to aid you.

ANDROMACHE.

More than once
I sent to him.

ATTENDANT.

Suppose you that he heeds
None of your messengers?

ANDROMACHE.

What means this question?
Wilt thou accept such office?

ATTENDANT.

What pretext
To colour my long absence from this house
Shall I allege?

ANDROMACHE.

Full many are the schemes
Which thou, who art a woman, can devise.

ATTENDANT.

'Twere dangerous; for Hermione is watchful.

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ANDROMACHE.

Dost thou perceive the danger, and renounce
Thy friends in their distress?

ATTENDANT.

Not thus: forbear
To brand me with so infamous a charge:
I go; for of small value is the life
(Whate'er befall me) of a female slave.

[*Exit* ATTENDANT.

ANDROMACHE.

Proceed: meanwhile I to the conscious air
Those plaints and bitter wailings will repeat,
On which I ever dwell. Unhappy women
Find comfort in perpetually talking
Of what they suffer. But my groans arise
Not from one ill, but many ills: the walls
Of my lov'd country ras'd, my Hector slain,
And that hard Fortune, in whose yoke bound fast,
Thus am I fallen into th' unseemly state
Of servitude. We never ought to call
Frail mortals happy, at their latest hour
Till we behold them to the shades descend.

ELEGY.

In Helen sure, to Troy's imperial towers
Young Paris wafted no engaging Bride,
But when he led her to those nuptial bowers,
Some Fiend infernal cross'd the billowy tide.

With brandish'd javelin and devouring flame,
For her the Grecian warriors, to thy shore,
O Ilion, in a (3) thousand vessels came,
And drench'd thy smould'ring battlements with gore.

(3) "A fixed number for an uncertain: for Homer states the navy of "the Greeks as consisting of 1186 ships; Plutarch calls them 1200: the "Scholiast 1170: in other writers more variations occur. But the Poets

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(4) Around the walls, my Hector, once thy boast,
Fix'd to his car, was by Achilles borne.
And from my chamber hurried to the coast
I veil'd my head in servitude forlorn.

" usually accord in the number of one thousand, as Euripides in both " the Iphigenias, Rhesus and Electra: Lycophron, v. 210.

Ο χιλιαρχης τε πολυραιστου στρατου.

Led in a thousand ships that vengeful host.

Virgil, Æn. L. 2. v. 197.

" Quos neque Tydides, nec Larissæus Achilles
" Non anni domuere decem, non mille carinæ.
" What Diomede, nor Thetis' greater Son,
" A thousand ships, nor ten years siege had done. DRYDEN.

" Ovid Met. L. 12. v. 6.

" Conjuratæque sequuntur
" Mille rates.
" A thousand ships were mann'd to sail the sea. DRYDEN.
" Dananm Euboico littore mille rates.

PROPERT. L. 2. El. 26. v. 38.

In one vast fleet, a thousand ships, the boast
Of Greece, assembled near Eubœa's coast.

" Rex ille regum, ductor Agamemnon ducum,
" Cujus secutæ mille vexillum rates. SENECA, Ag. v. 39.

That king of kings, of mighty chiefs that chief,
Illustrious Agamemnon, who display'd
His banners, follow'd by a thousand ships.

" Æschylus too in his Agamemnon, v. 45.

" στολον Αργειων χιλιοπεμπτον.

" A thousand ships, the Argive fleet." *Potter.* BARNES.

(4) " Here the Scholiast with propriety observes that Euripides ex- " ceeds the history in saying that Hector was dragged around the walls; " for Homer mentions no such thing, but says he was dragged from the " walls to the ships (nor yet thrice round the funeral pyre of Patroclus, " as the Scholiast asserts); Virgil therefore hath also committed an error " when he sings, Æn. L. 1. v. 488.

" Ter circum Iliacos raptaverat Hectora muros,
" Thrice round the Trojan walls Achilles drew
" The corps of Hector, whom in fight he slew. DRYDEN.

" but the mistake arose from hence, that Hector, while living, is said " by Homer to have gone thrice round the walls of Troy in his flight " from Achilles." BARNES.

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Much wept these streaming eyes, when in the dust
My City, Palace, Husband, prostrate lay.
Subject to fierce Hermione's disgust,
Why should I still behold the hated day?

Harrass'd with insults from that haughty dame,
Round Thetis' bust my suppliant arms I fling,
And here with gushing tears bewail my shame,
As from the rock bursts forth the living spring.

CHORUS, ANDROMACHE.

CHORUS.

O D E.

I. 1.

O thou, who, seated in this holy space,
Hast Thetis' temple thy asylum made,
Tho' Phthia gave me birth, to aid
Thee, hapless Dame of Asiatic race,
I hither come; would I from direful harms
Could guard, could heal the strife
Twixt thee and that indignant Wife
Hermione, whom ruthless discord arms
To punish thee the rival of her charms,
A captive, to the genial bed,
Who by Achilles' son wert led.

I. 2.

Aware of fate, th' impending evil weigh,
A helpless Phrygian nymph, thou striv'st in vain
'Gainst her of Sparta's proud domain:
Cease, to this sea-born Goddess, cease to pray,
And at her blazing shrine no longer stay:
For how can it avail
To thee with hopeless sorrow pale
To suffer all thy beauties to decay,
Because thy rulers with oppression sway?
Thou to superior might must bend.
Why, feeble as thou art, contend?

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II. 1.

Yet hasten from the Nereid's lofty seat,
Consider that thou tread'st a foreign plain,
And that these hostile walls detain
In strictest bondage thy reluctant feet,
Here none of all those friends, that numerous band,
Who shar'd thy greatness, is at hand,
To cheer thee in these days of shame,
O wretched, wretched Dame.

II. 2.

A miserable matron thou art come
From Troy to our abodes, unwilling guest;
Tho' mine the sympathizing breast,
Yet I thro' reverence to our lords am dumb,
Lest she, who springs from Helen, Child of Jove,
Should be a witness of that love
Which I to thee whose griefs I share,
Impell'd by pity bear.

HERMIONE, ANDROMACHE, CHORUS.

HERMIONE.

The gorgeous ornaments of gold, these brows
Encircling, and the tissued robes I wear,
I from Achilles', or from Peleus' stores,
As chosen presents when I hither came,
Receiv'd not, but from Sparta's realm, these gifts
My Father Menelaus hath bestow'd
With a large dower, that I might freely speak.
Such is the answer which to you I make,
O Phthian Dames. But thou, who art a slave
And captive, would'st in these abodes usurp
Dominion, and expell me; to my Lord
Thy drugs have made me odious, hence ensues
My barrenness: the Asiatic Dames,
For these abhorr'd devices are renown'd;
But thee will I subdue, nor shall this dome
Of the immortal Nereid, nor her altar
Or temple save thee from impending death,

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If either man or God should be dispos'd
To rescue thee, 'twere fit, that to atone
For the proud thoughts thou in thy happier days
Didst nourish, thou should'st tremble, at my knees
Fall low, and sweep the pavement of my house,
Sprinkling the waters from a golden urn.
Know where thou art: no Hector governs here,
No Phrygian Priam doth this sceptre wield;
This is no (5) Chrysa, but a Grecian city.
Yet thou, O wretched woman, art arriv'd
At such a pitch of madness, that thou dar'st
To sleep e'en with the Son of him who slew
Thy Husband, and a brood of children bear
To him whose hands yet reek with Phrygian gore,
Such is the whole abhorr'd Barbarian race;
The Father with his Daughter, the vile Son
With his own Mother, with her Brother too
The Sister, sins, friends by their dearest friends
Are murder'd; deeds like these no wholesome law
Prohibits: introduce not among us
Such crimes, for 'tis unseemly that one man
Possess two women: the fond youth who seeks
Domestic harmony, confines his love
To one fair partner of the genial bed.

CHORUS.

The female sex are envious, and pursue
With an incessant hatred those who share
Their nuptial joys.

ANDROMACHE.

Alas! impetuous youth

(5) The conjectural alteration of χρυση "the city Chrysa," instead of of χρυσος "gold," suggested first by Petitus in his miscellaneous observations, and afterwards adopted by Barnes, appears to me so manifest an improvement, that I have not scrupled to avail myself of it, though Dr. Musgrave has in his edition rejected it as unnecessary, and Markland and Brunck read instead of ωδε χρυση, ο Ζαχρυσος, auri dives ille Priamus, which seems to be as mere a conjecture as the former, but a much less happy one.

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Proves baleful to mankind, and there are none
Who act with justice in their blooming years.
But what I dread is this, lest slavery curb
My tongue, tho' I have many truths to utter:
In this dispute with you, if I prevail,
That very triumph may become my bane:
For those of haughty spirits ill endure
The most prevailing arguments when urg'd
By their inferiors. Yet my better cause
I will not thus betray. Say, youthful Princess,
What reasons of irrefragable force
Enable me to drive you from the couch
Of your own lawful husband? to the Phrygians
Is Sparta grown inferior, and hath Fortune
On us conferr'd the palm? do you behold me
Still free? elate with youth, a vigorous frame,
The wide extent of empire I possess,
And number of my friends, am I desirous
To occupy these mansions in your stead,
That in your stead I might bring forth a race
Of slaves, th' appendages of my distress?
Will any one endure (if you produce
No children) that my Sons should be the Kings
Of Phthia? — the Greeks love me for the sake
Of Hector, I too was forsooth obscure,
And not a Queen, in Troy. Your husband's hate,
Not from my drugs, but from your soul, unsuited
For social converse, springs: there is a philtre
To gain his love. Not beauty, but the virtues,
O woman, to the partners of our bed
Afford delight. But if it sting your pride
That Sparta's a vast city, while you treat
Scyros with scorn, amidst the poor, display
Your riches, and of Menelaus speak
As greater than Achilles; hence your Lord
Abhors you. For a woman, tho' bestow'd
On a vile mate, should learn to yield, nor strive

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For the pre-eminence. In (6) Thrace o'erspread
With snow, if you were wedded to a king,
Who to his bed takes many various Dames,
Would you have slain them? you would cast disgrace
On your whole sex by such unsated lust;
Base were the deed: for tho' our souls are warm'd
With more intense desires than those of men,
We modestly conceal them. For thy sake
I, O my dearest Hector, lov'd the objects
Of thy affections, whene'er Venus' wiles
Caus'd thee to err, and at my breast full oft
Nourish'd thy spurious (7) children, that in nought
Thy joys I might embitter: acting thus
I won him by my virtues. But you tremble
E'en if the drops of Heaven's transparent dew
Rest on your Husband. Strive not to transcend
Your Mother in a wild excess of love,
O woman. For the children, if endu'd
With reason, such examples should avoid
Of those who bore them, as corrupt the soul.

CHORUS.

As far as possible, O Queen, comply
With my advice, and in mild terms accost her.

HERMIONE.

What mean'st thou by this arrogance of speech,
This vain debate, as if thou still wert chaste,
And I had stray'd from virtue's path?

(6) "On the manners of the Thracians, see Herodotus, Strabo, and "Pomponius Mela. These authors relate that the inhabitants of that "country were wont to marry from three to twelve, or even more "wives, if they had fortunes sufficient for their support. From the "notes of Gaspar Stiblinus. See Ino, v. 18—25" BARNES.

(7) "Some represent this assertion as unauthorised by history, and "contend that Hector is not recorded to have had a son by any other "woman: but they who hold this language are inconsiderate, for Anaxi-"crates in the second of his Argolics mentions a spurious son of Hector "being taken when Troy was sack'd and perishing, and says that two "others escap'd, one of whom, Scamandrius, went and settled at "Tanais." SCHOLIAST.

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ANDROMACHE.

The words
You have been using, now at least are void
Of modesty.

HERMIONE.

O woman, may this breast
Harbour no soul like thine.

ANDROMACHE.

Tho' bashful youth
Glow on your cheek, indecent is your language.

HERMIONE.

Thou by thy actions more than by thy words
Hast prov'd the malice which to me thou bear'st.

ANDROMACHE.

Why will you not conceal th' inglorious pangs
Of jealous love?

HERMIONE.

What woman but resents
Such wrongs, and deems them great?

ANDROMACHE.

The use some make
Of these misfortunes adds to their renown:
But shame waits those who are devoid of wisdom.

HERMIONE.

We dwell not in a city where prevail
Barbarian laws.

ANDROMACHE.

In Phrygia or in Greece
Base actions are with infamy attended.

HERMIONE.

Tho' most expert in every subtle art,
Yet die thou must.

ANDROMACHE.

Behold you Thetis' image
Turning its eyes on you?

HERMIONE.

She loathes thy country
Where her Achilles treacherously was slain.

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ANDROMACHE.

Your Mother Helen caus'd his death, not I.

HERMIONE.

Would'st thou retrace still farther the sad tale
Of our misfortunes?

ANDROMACHE.

I restrain my tongue.

HERMIONE.

Speak to me now on that affair which caus'd
My coming hither.

ANDROMACHE.

All I say is this;
You have not so much wisdom as you need.

HERMIONE.

From this pure temple of the sea-born Goddess
Wilt thou depart?

ANDROMACHE.

(8) Not while I live: you first
Must slay, then drag me hence.

HERMIONE.

I am resolv'd
How to proceed, and wait my Lord's return
No longer.

ANDROMACHE.

Nor will I before he come
Surrender up myself.

HERMIONE.

With flaming brands
Hence will I drive thee, and no deference pay
To thy entreaties.

(8) I have endeavoured to render the meaning, though not the exact words of this line, conformably to the reading of Ει μεν Σαναμαι γ, &c. the preceding editions instead of μεν read μη here as well as in the latter part of the verse: but Brunck cites for his authority the royal manuscripts at Paris, and says that the person who collated them for Dr. Musgrave had a very defective eye-sight: the Lascaris and Aldus editions both read μη, but the construction of Brunck seems less embarrassed.

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ANDROMACHE.

Kindle them; the Gods
Will view the deed.

HERMIONE.

The scourge too is prepar'd.

ANDROMACHE.

Transpierce this bosom, deluge with my gore
The altar of the Goddess, you by her
Shall be at length o'ertaken.

HERMIONE.

From thy cradle,
Train'd up and harden'd in Barbarian pride,
Canst thou endure to die? from this asylum
Soon will I rouse thee by thy own consent,
I with such baits am furnish'd, but conceal
My purpose, which th' event itself ere long
Will make conspicuous. Keep a steady seat,
For tho' by molten lead thou wert' enclos'd
Hence would I rouse thee, ere Achilles' son,
Whom thou confid'st in, to this land return.

[*Exit* HERMIONE.

ANDROMACHE.

In him I place my still unshaken trust.
Yet is it strange that the celestial Powers,
To heal the serpent's venom, have assign'd
Expedients, but no remedy devis'd
Against an evil woman who surpasses
Or vipers' stings or the consuming flame:
Thus baleful is our influence on mankind.

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. 1.

The winged son of Maia and of Jove
To many sorrowful events gave birth,
And scatter'd discord o'er the bleeding earth,
When he thro' sacred Ida's piny grove

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Guided the car of three immortal Dames,
(The golden prize of beauty to obtain,
In hateful strife engag'd, who urg'd their claims;)
To where in his mean hut abode a lonely Swain.

I. 2.

No sooner had they reach'd the destin'd bower,
Than in the limpid spring her snowy frame
Each Goddess lav'd; to Priam's Son then came
With artful speeches of such winning power
As might beguile the rash and amorous boy:
Venus prevail'd; her words, tho' sweet their sound,
Prov'd of destructive consequence to Troy,
Whose stately bulwarks hence lie levell'd with the ground.

II. 1.

When new-born Paris first beheld the light,
Would that his Mother o'er her head, this brand
Ordain'd by Heaven to fire his native land,
Had cast, before he dwelt on Ida's height.
Unheeded from the bay's prophetic shade
Exclaim'd Cassandra; "let the child be slain;
"Kill him, or Priam's empire is betray'd."
Frantic she rav'd and su'd to every Prince in vain.

II. 2.

Deaf was each Prince, or Ilion ne'er had felt
The servile yoke, nor hadst thou, hapless fair,
Beneath these roofs, encompass'd by despair,
And subject to a rigid master, dwelt.
O had he died, the fated toil of Greece,
That stubborn war thro' ten revolving years,
Had rous'd no Heroes from the lap of peace,
Nor caus'd the Widow's shrieks, the hoary Father's tears.

MENELAUS, MOLOSSUS, ANDROMACHE, CHORUS.

MENELAUS.

Your Son I hither bring, whom from this fane

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With secrecy, you to another house,
Without my Daughter's knowledge, had remov'd.
You boasted that this image of the Goddess
To you, and those who hid him, would afford
A sure asylum: but your deep-laid craft,
O Woman, cannot baffle Menelaus.
If you depart not hence, he in your stead
Shall be the victim; therefore well revolve
Th' important question; had you rather die,
Or, with his streaming gore, let him atone
The foul offence 'gainst me and 'gainst my Daughter
By you committed?

ANDROMACHE.

Thou, O vain opinion,
Hast with renown puff'd up full many men
Who were of no account. I deem those blest
On whom with truth such honor is bestow'd:
But them who by fallacious means obtain it
I hold unworthy of possessing fame,
When all their seeming wisdom but arises
From Fortune's gifts. Thou with the bravest chiefs
Of Greece, from Priam erst didst wrest his Troy;
E'en thou who art so mean as to inspire
Thy Daughter with resentment 'gainst a child,
And strive with me a miserable captive:
Unworthy of thy conquest over Troy
Thee do I hold, and Troy yet more disgrac'd
By such a victor. Some indeed there are
To all appearance upright, who awhile
Outwardly glitter, though they in their hearts
Are on a level with the worthless bulk
Of mortals, and superior but in wealth
Whose power is great. This conference let us end,
O Menelaus, be it now suppos'd
I by thy Daughter am already slain:
'Twill be impossible for her to scape
From the pollution ruthless murder brings;

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Thou too by many tongues wilt be accus'd
Of this vile deed, with her will they confound
Thee the abettor But if I preserve
My life, are ye resolv'd to slay my Son?
How will the Father tamely bear the death
Of his lov'd offspring? he was not esteem'd
At Troy so void of courage. He is gone
Whither his duty calls. Soon will the chief
Act worthy of the race from which he springs,
The hoary Peleus, and his dauntless Sire
Achilles, he from these abodes will cast
Thy Daughter forth, and when thou to another
In marriage giv'st her, what hast thou to say
On her behalf? " that from a worthless Lord
" Her wisdom drove her?" This would be a falshood
Too gross. But who would wed her? till grown grey
In widowhood, shall she beneath thy roofs
Fix her loath'd residence? O wretched Man,
The rising conflux of unnumber'd woes
Behold'st thou not? hadst thou not rather find
Thy Daughter wrong'd by concubines, than suffering
Th' indignities I speak of? we from trifles
Such grievous mischiefs ought not to create;
Nor if we women are a deadly bane,
To the degenerate nature of our sex
Should men conform. If I pernicious drugs
Have to thy Daughter minister'd, and been,
As she pretends, the cause of her abortion,
Immediately will I without reluctance,
And without groveling at this altar's base,
To any rigid punishment submit
Inflicted by thy Son-in law, from whom
I surely merit as severe revenge
For having made him childless. Such am I:
But in thy temper I perceive one cause
Of just alarm, since in that luckless strife

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About a woman, and a vile one too,
Thou the fam'd Phrygian city didst destroy.

CHORUS.

Too freely hast thou spoken, in a tone
Which ill becomes thy sex, and that high soul
The bounds of wisdom hath o'erleap'd.

MENELAUS.

O woman,
So small an object, as you rightly judge,
Deserves not the attention of my realm,
Nor that of Greece. But learn this obvious truth;
To any man whate'er he greatly needs,
Is of more worth by far than taking Troy.
My Daughter I assist, because I deem it
A wrong of great importance should she lose
Her bridal rights: for every woman looks
On all beside as secondary ills;
But if she from her Husband's arms be torn,
Seems reft of life itself. That Phthia's Prince
Direct my servants, and that his obey
Me and my race, is fitting: for true friends
Have no distinct possessions, but hold all
In common. While I wait for the return
Of her long absent Lord, should I neglect
My Daughter's interests, I were weak, not wise.
But leave this shrine of Thetis: for the child
Shall if you bleed escape th' impending doom:
Him, if you die not, will I slay, since fate
Of you or him the forfeit life demands.

ANDROMACHE.

Ah me! a bitter and unwelcome choice
Of life on terms like these hast thou propos'd;
Wretch that I am! for whether I decline
Or make such option, I am wretched still.
O thou, who by a trifling wrong provok'd,
Committ'st great crimes, attend: for what offence

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Would'st thou bereave me of my life? what city
Have I betray'd? what child of thine destroy'd?
What mansion fir'd? I to my master's bed
By force was dragg'd: yet me alone, not him
The author of that crime, thou mean'st to slay.
Thou, the first cause o'erlooking, on th' effect
Which it produces, vent'st thy rage. What woes
Encompass wretched me! alas, my country!
How dreadful are the wrongs which I endure!
But wherefore was I doom'd to bear a child,
And to the burden under which I groan
Add a new burden? (9) what delight can life
To me afford? or on what fortunes past
Or present should I turn these eyes which saw
The corse of Hector by the victor's car
Whirl'd round the walls, and wretched Troy a heap
Of blazing ruins? I meantime a slave
By my dishevell'd hair was dragg'd aboard
The Argive navy; when I reach'd the coast
Of Phthia, and cohabited with those
Who slew my Hector; (but why lavish plaints
On past calamities, without deploring
Or taking a due estimate of those
Which now impend?) I had this only son
My life's last comfort left, and they who take
Delight in deeds of cruelty, would slay him;
Yet to preserve my miserable life
He shall not perish; for auspicious hopes,
Could he be saved, his future days attend:
But if I died not for my Son, reproach
Would be my portion. Lo! I leave the altar
And now am in thy hands, stab, slay me, bind,
Strain hard the deadly noose. My Son, thy Mother,
To rescue thee from an untimely grave,

(9) The transposition I have here adopted, is made use of by Dr. Musgrave in his edition, in conformity to the order of citation observed by the Scholiast; and seems to be a considerable improvement to the connection.

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Descends the shades beneath; if thou escape
The ruthless grasp of fate, remember me
How miserably I suffer'd; and with kisses,
At his return, when thou goest forth to meet
Thy Father, when a flood of tears thou shedd'st,
And cling'st around him with those pliant arms,
Inform him how I acted. All men hold
Their children dear as life; but he who scorns them
Because he ne'er experienc'd what it is
To be a Father, tho' with fewer griefs
Attended, but enjoys imperfect bliss.

Rises, and advances from the altar.

CHORUS.

I with compassion to this moving tale
Have listen'd; for distress, to all mankind,
Tho' strangers, must seem piteous: but on thee,
O Menelaus, 'tis incumbent now
To reconcile thy Daughter, and this Captive,
That she may from her sorrows be releas'd.

MENELAUS.

Seize her, and bind her hands; for she shall hear
No pleasing language: I propos'd to slay
Your Son, that you might leave that hallow'd altar
Of Thetis, and thus craftily induc'd you
To fall into my hands, and meet your death;
Be well assur'd, such is the present state
Of your affairs: as for that Boy, on him
My Daughter shall pass judgement, or to kill,
Or spare him: but now enter these abodes,
That you may learn, slave as you are, to treat
Those who are free no longer with disdain.

ANDROMACHE.

Thou hast o'erreach'd me by thy treacherous arts;
Alas! I am betray'd.

MENELAUS.

Proclaim these tidings
To all men; for I shall not contradict them.

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ANDROMACHE.

By those who dwell beside Eurotas' stream
Are such base frauds call'd wisdom?

MENELAUS.

Both at Troy
And there, 'tis just the injur'd should retaliate.

ANDROMACHE.

Believ'st thou that the Gods are Gods no longer,
Nor wield the bolt of vengeance?

MENELAUS.

We must look
To that: but you shall die.

ANDROMACHE.

And wilt thou seize
This unfledg'd bird, to slay him?

MENELAUS.

No, I will not,
But give him to my Daughter, who must act
As she thinks fit?

ANDROMACHE.

Then how alas, my Son,
Can I sufficiently bewail thy fate?

MENELAUS.

"Him," 'twas but now with arrogance you said,
"Auspicious hopes attend."

ANDROMACHE.

Ye worst of foes
To all mankind, inhabitants of Sparta!
Expert in (10) treacherous counsels, still devising
New falshoods, curst artificers of mischief,
Your paths are crooked, yet tho' void of worth,
Thro' Greece by circumspection ye uphold
An undeserved preeminence. What crimes,

(10) "The Poet seems here to have in view the great cruelty of the "Spartans to the Platæans, whom they slew to a man, after they had "voluntarily surrendered themselves: in regard to which see Thucidi-"des, L. 3, on the fifth year of the Peloponesian war." BARNES.

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What murders, what a thirst for abject gain
Characterise your realm! with specious tongue
Uttering a language foreign to your heart,
Are ye not ever caught? perdition seize you!
Death is less grievous than thou deem'st, to me
Who date my utter ruin from that hour
When Ilion's wretched city was involv'd
In the same fate with my illustrious lord,
Whose spear oft drove thee trembling from the field
Into thy ships: but now against his Wife
A formidable warrior art thou come
To murder me: strike, for this coward tongue
Shall never leave thine and thy daughter's shame
Unpublish'd. If in Sparta thou art great,
So was I erst in Ilion; but exult not
In my disasters, for on thee ere long
The same reverse of fortune may attend.

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. 1.

Two rival Consorts ne'er can I approve,
Or Sons, the source of strife, their birth who owe
To different Mothers; hence connubial love
Is banish'd, and the mansion teems with woe.
One blooming nymph let cautious Husbands wed,
And share with her alone an unpolluted bed.

I. 2.

No prudent city, no well-govern'd state,
More than a single (11) Potentate will own;

(11) The northern provinces of Macedonia, Thessaly, and Epirus, are distinguished by the geographers from "Greece properly so called," and represented by antient writers as less attached to liberty, and inured to live under kingly government for a long series of ages. See Cellarius, L. 2. c. 13. S. 195. Strabo speaks of the Thessalians as descended, according to antient tradition, from Jason and Medea; the Poets have accordingly represented fraud and sorcery as two of their principal characteristics. According to Eustathius on Homer v. 1. p. 331. ed. Romæ,

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Their subjects droop beneath the grievous weight
When two bear rule, and discord shakes the throne;
And if two Bards awake their sounding lyres
E'en the harmonious Muse a cruel strife inspires.

II. 1.

To aid the bark, when prosperous gales arise,
Two jarring Pilots shall misguide the helm:
Weak is a multitude when all are wise,
One simpler Monarch could have sav'd the realm.
Let a sole Chief the house or empire sway,
And all who hope for bliss their Lord's behests obey.

II. 2.

This truth hath Menelaus' Daughter shewn,
Furious she comes the victim to destroy;

the term Θεσσαλον συρισμα, made use of by Euripides in his Tragedy of the Phœnician Virgins, became afterwards proverbial; and

"Full many false Thessalians were at hand,"

is the literal translation of a line preserved by the Scholiast on that passage, and inserted by Dr. Musgrave as the 194th of his Fragmenta Incerta. From the Comic Aristophanes, the inveterate enemy of Euripides, the Thessalians have by no means experienced milder treatment, being branded in his Plutus with the charge of carrying on that most infamous of all merchandizes, the slave trade. These Phthian dames, who form the Chorus, are indeed here represented as possessing in a high degree the softer virtues of their sex, pitying the captive Andromache, and expressing their earnest wishes to relieve her distress: but, when their notions in regard to the most eligible form of government are totally opposite to those which the Poet in the next Tragedy of the Suppliants has put into the mouth of Theseus, it is impossible to hesitate for a moment in determining whether it was the intention of Euripides to convey to his readers what he considered as the genuine maxims of political wisdom, under the character of an illustrious Hero, the ruler of his native Athens, which he on all occasions extols to the skies; or these Thessalian females, born in a land which he and his contemporary writers represent as more than half immersed in barbarism, and who must, in whatever point of view we take them, be considered as little acquainted with the science of governing a state, both from the reclose life to which their whole sex was in those days confined, and from their being only the menial attendants of a Princess, but not graced themselves with that hereditary rank which, in their opening of the next ode, they consider as the supreme bliss of mortals.

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And, that their blood may nuptial wrongs atone,
The Phrygian captive, and that hapless boy,
With impious rage unjust would cause to bleed;
May pity, aweful Queen, thy lifted arm impede!

But I before these doors behold the pair
On whom the fatal sentence now is past.
Thou wretched Dame, and wretched child who diest
Because thy Mother to a foreign bed
By force was dragg'd, in her imputed guilt
Thou wert not an accomplice, thou thy Lords
Hast not offended.

ANDROMACHE.

To the realms beneath
Lo I am hurried, with these bloody hands
Fast bound in galling chains.

MOLOSSUS.

I too, O Mother,
Under thy wing, to those loath'd shades descend
A victim. O ye lords of Phthia's land,
And thou, my Father, succour those thou lov'st.

ANDROMACHE.

Cling to thy Mother's bosom, O my child,
Together let us die.

MOLOSSUS.

Ah me! how grievous
My sufferings are! too clearly I perceive
That I, and thou my Mother, both are wretched.

MENELAUS.

Go both together to th' infernal realm:
For ye from hostile turrets hither came.
Although the cause why you and he must bleed
Is not the same; my sentence takes away
Your life, and my Hermione's your Son's.
The highest folly were it to permit
A foe to live and vex us, whom with ease
We might dispatch, and from our house remove
Such danger.

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ANDROMACHE.

O my Husband, would to Heaven
I had thy arm to aid me; and thy Spear,
Thou Son of Priam.

MOLOSSUS.

Wretched me! what charm
Can I devise t' avert impending fate?

ANDROMACHE.

My Son, implore the mercy of our Lord
Clasping his knees.

MOLOSSUS.

Dear Monarch, spare my life,

ANDROMACHE.

Tears from these eyes burst forth like trickling drops
By the Sun's heat forc'd from a solid rock,
Wretch that I am!

MOLOSSUS.

What remedy, alas!
For these dire evils can my soul devise?

MENELAUS.

Why dost thou idly grovel at my feet
With fruitless supplications, while I stand
Firm as a rock, or as th' unpitying wave?
Such conduct serves my interests: no affection
To thee I bear, because my morn of life
Was wasted in the conflict, ere I took
Troy and thy Mother, whose society
Thou in the realms of Pluto shalt enjoy.

PELEUS, MENELAUS, ANDROMACHE, MOLOSSUS, CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Peleus, I see, draws near, his aged feet
With eager haste advancing.

PELEUS.

You, and him

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Who stands presiding o'er a murderous deed,
What means this uproar that disturbs the house,
I question, and what practices are these
Ye carry on unauthoriz'd by law?
O Menelaus, stay thy furious hand,
And let not execution thus outstrip
All righteous judgement. O my friends, lead on;
For such a dread emergency appears
T' admit of no delay. Could I regain
That youthful vigour which I erst enjoy'd
As prosperous breezes aid the floating sails,
This captive would I favour. Say, what right,
Have they to bind your hands, and drag along
You and your Son? for like the bleating Mother,
Led forth to slaughter with her lamb, you perish,
While I and your unweeting Lord are absent.

ANDROMACHE.

They, as thou see'st, O venerable Man,
Me and my Son thus bear to instant death.
What shall I say to thee, whom I with speed
Not by one single messenger but thousands
Have sent for? sure thou, of the fatal strife
In these divided mansions, with his Daughter,
To which I owe my ruin, must have heard:
And from the violated shrine of Thetis,
Who bore to thee a noble Son, the Goddess
Whom thou rever'st, e'en now with brutal force
Me have they torn, nor judg'd my cause, nor wait
For absent Neoptolemus, but, knowing
That I and that this Child who hath committed
No fault, are left alone and unprotected,
Would slay us both. But, O thou aged man,
Thus prostrate on my knees, to thee I sue,
And, though this hand must not presume to touch
Thy honour'd beard, conjure thee by the Gods,
Rescue us, or to thy eternal shame
Both he and I must miserably bleed.

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PELEUS.

My orders are that you those galling chains
Unbind and loose her hands, else will I make
The disobedient weep.

MENELAUS.

But I, your equal,
Who have much more authority o'er her,
Forbid them.

PELEUS.

Com'st thou hither to direct
My houshold? is it not enough for thee
To rule thy Spartans?

MENELAUS.

Her I took at Troy.

PELEUS.

She, to reward his valour, was bestow'd
Upon my grandson.

MENELAUS.

Doth not all he owns,
To me, and what is mine, to him belong?

PELEUS.

For honest purposes, but not for crimes
And murderous violence.

MENELAUS.

You ne'er shall take her
Out of my hands.

PELEUS.

Thy head I with this sceptre
Will smite.

MENELAUS.

Draw near; if you presume to touch me,
Soon shall you rue such outrage.

PELEUS.

O thou villain,
Sprung from a race of impious Sires, what right
To be accounted an illustrious man,
And number'd with the truly brave, hast thou,

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Who by a Phrygian wanderer wert depriv'd
Of thy fair Consort, after thou hadst left
Thy house unbarr'd and destitute of guards,
As if thou in thy mansions hadst possess'd
A virtuous Dame, though she of all her sex
Was the most dissolute? nor if she would
Can any Spartan nymph be chaste? for wandering
From their own homes, distinguish'd by bare legs,
And zoneless vest, they with young men contend
In swiftness and in wrestling; I such customs,
Hold in abhorrence. Is there any room
For wonder if the women prove unchaste
Whom thus you educate? thy Helen ought
To have propos'd these questions, ere she left
Her native realm, regardless of thy love,
And by that youthful paramour seduc'd,
Wantonly fled into a foreign land.
Yet for her sake didst thou that numerous host
Of Greeks collect, and lead them to assail
The Phrygian ramparts. Thou that beauteous Dame
Should'st rather have despis'd, nor in her cause
Wielded the javelin, when thou found'st her worthless,
But suffer'd her in Ilion to remain,
And sent rich gifts to Paris on these terms,
That to thy house she never should return.
But thou, instead of suffering these just motives
To make their due impression on thy soul,
Full many valiant warriors hast destroy'd,
Made th' aged Matron childless, and depriv'd
Of his illustrious sons the hoary Sire.
Number'd with those who owe to thee thy ruin
Am wretched I; for like some evil Genius
In thee do these indignant eyes behold
The murderer of Achilles: thou alone,
Save by the missile shaft, unwounded cam'st
From Ilion's hostile shores; in burnish'd chests
Didst thou bear thither the same glittering arms

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Which thou bear'st back again. Before he wedded,
I warn'd my grandson to form no connection
With thee, nor into these abodes admit
The brood of that Adultress; for the Daughters
Their mother emulate in deeds of shame.
Look well to this, ye Suitors, and select
The Damsel with maternal worth endu'd.
Then with what scorn did'st thou thy Brother treat
Commanding him 'gainst reason to transgress,
And sacrifice his Daughter. Thou such fears,
Lest thou that execrable Wife should'st lose,
Didst entertain. When thou hadst taken Troy,
This too I urge against thee, though thou hadst
Thy Consort in thy power, thou didst not slay her,
But when her throbbing bosom thou beheld'st (12),
Didst cast away thy sword, receive her kisses,
And sooth the fears of her who had betray'd thee.
O worthless miscreant, whom the Cyprian Queen
Hath thus debas'd! thou after this intrud'st
Into my Grandson's palace, in his absence
Committ'st these outrages, and basely slay'st
A miserable Woman, and her Child,
Thee and thy Daughter who shall cause to weep
Though trebly illegitimate his birth.
Oft' the parch'd heath, when duly till'd, exceeds
The richest soil, and greater instances
Of virtue are in many a bastard found
Than in the lawfully begotten race.
But take thy Daughter hence. Far better is it
To form affinity and strictest friendship
With a poor man of worth, than him who joins
Iniquity with wealth: but as for thee,
Thou art a thing of nought.

(12) Οϙ' ου Μενελας της Ελενης τα μαλα τω Γυμνας Παριπλω εξεδυλ'. απο τ' ξιφος.

Aristophanis Lysistrate, v. 155.

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CHORUS.

Among mankind,
Oft' from a small beginning doth the tongue
Great strife occasion: but the wise beware
Of entering on a contest with their friend.

MENELAUS.

Why do we speak in such exalted terms
Of aged men, as if they were endued
With wisdom, tho' in former days suppos'd
By the whole Grecian race to judge aright?
When you, O Peleus, who derive your birth
From an illustrious Sire, and with my house
So nearly are connected, hold a language
Disgraceful to yourself, and slander me,
For a Barbarian Dame, whom from this land
You ought to banish far beyond the Nile,
Beyond the Phasis, and applaud my vengeance;
Because she comes from Asiatic shores,
Where many valiant Grecian chiefs lie slain,
And hath in part been guilty of the blood
Of your fam'd Son; for Paris, by whose shaft,
Transpierc'd, Achilles perish'd, was the Brother,
And she the Wife of Hector: yet you enter
The same abode with her, the genial board
With her partake, allow her to bring forth
Under your roofs an execrable brood.
These mischiefs both to you and me, old man,
Foreseeing, have I snatch'd her from your hands
With a design to kill her. But, O say,
(For there is nought of meanness in our holding
This conference), if my Daughter bear no child,
And she have Sons, will you appoint them Lords
Of this your Phthian land? shall they who spring
From a Barbarian race, o'er Greeks bear rule?
Am I, because I hate injustice, void
Of understanding, and are you discreet?
Reflect on this; had you bestow'd your Daughter

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On any citizen, were she thus treated,
Would you sit down and bear her wrongs in silence?
I deem you would not. Why then with such harshness
Speak you in favour of a foreign Dame
Against your nearest friends? as great a right
To vengeance as her Husband, hath the Wife
Whom her Lord injures: for while he whose doors
An unchaste Consort enters, in his hands
Hath power to right himself, a woman's strength
Lies only in her parents and her friends.
My Daughter, therefore, am I bound to aid.
You shew the marks of age: for while you talk
Of that fam'd war I wag'd, you more befriend me
Than if you had been silent. Deep in woe
Was Helen plung'd, not by her own consent
But by the Gods: and this event hath prov'd
To Greece most advantageous, for its Sons,
Who knew not how till then to wield the spear,
Grew valiant. From Experience, best of tutors,
Men gather all the knowledge they possess.
But when I saw my Consort, in forbearing
To take away her life, I acted wisely:
And would that you had done like me, nor slain
Your Brother (13) Phocus; this to you I speak
Through mere benevolence, and not in wrath:
But if resentment o'er your soul usurp
An empire, such intemperance of the tongue
Will be in you more shameful, while my wishes
I by a prudent forethought shall attain.

(13) "Telamon and Peleus having invited their Brother to some "games, when it came to Peleus' turn to throw the quoit, he pur- "posely struck Phocus with it, and killed him. He is said to have "committed this crime at the solicitation of his Mother, for he and "Telamon sprung from a Daughter of Sciron, and Phocus from a "sister of Thetis, if the Greek writers are to be credited. As soon "as the murder was perpetrated, the Brothers both fled, and had "sentence of banishment passed on them by their father Æacus."

PAUSANIAS.

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CHORUS.

Now both desist (for this were better far)
From such unprofitable strife of words,
Or ye will both offend.

PELEUS.

Ah me! through Greece
What mischievous (14) opinions have prevail'd!
When with the spoils of vanquish'd foes, the host
A trophy rear, they think not how 'twas gain'd
By those brave Soldiers who endure the toil
Of battle, while their General bears away
All the renown: though he was only one
Who stood midst thousands brandishing his spear,
Nor any single combatant surpass'd,
He gains a larger portion of applause.
The venerable rulers of a city,
Plac'd in exalted stations, yet devoid
Of any real merit, overlook
The populace, though many in the crowd
Of their inferiors are more wise than they,
If haply courage and an honest zeal
Unite to place them in the public view.
Thou and thy Brother thus are swollen with pride,
From having led those troops to conquer Troy,
And triumph in the sufferings of your friends.
But henceforth will I teach thee not to look
On Paris, Ida's shepherd, as a foe,
More terrible than Peleus. If with speed
Thou quit not these abodes, and take away
Thy childless Daughter, my indignant Grandson,
By her dishevell'd hair, around the palace
Will drag this barren Dame, who stung with envy,
Cannot endure the fruitful Mother's joys.

(14) "Clytus is said to have repeated these verses at a banquet of "Alexander the Great, in order to diminish his exploits, by which he "provoked Alexander to kill him, as Quintus Curtius informs us in his "eighth book, and Plutarch in his Life of Alexander." BARNES.

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But, if she prove so luckless as to bear
No issue, ought she therefore to deprive us
Of our posterity? begone, ye slaves,
That I may see who dares obstruct my loosing
Her hands.— Rise up: tho' trembling with old age,
Your chains can I unbind. O worthless man,
Hast thou thus gall'd her hands? didst thou suppose
Thou held'st a bull or lion in the snare?
Or didst thou shudder lest she should snatch up
A sword, and wreak just vengeance on thy head?
Come hither to these sheltering arms, my child,
Unbind thy Mother's chains; in Phthia, thee
I'll educate, to them a bitter foe.
Should Sparta's sons by the protended spear
Obtain no fame, nor in th' embattled field
Their prowess signalize, be well assur'd
Ye have no other merit.

CHORUS.

Old men talk
With freedom, and their vehemence of soul
Is hard to be restrain'd.

MENELAUS.

Extremely prone
Are you to slander; much against my will
I came to Phthia, and am here resolv'd
That I will neither do nor suffer aught
Disgraceful: but to my own home with speed
Am I returning, and have little time
In vain debates to lavish: for a (15) city

(15) The following is the passage in Petitus' miscellaneous observations, L. 3. c. 16. referred to by Barnes; "I make no doubt but these "verses of the Poet are to be referred to the history of the time, and "mark out the year when this play was exhibited, which appears to "have been the second of the 90th Olympiad. Archias being prætor "of Athens, when war broke out between the Spartans and Argives, "as historians relate, and was preceded by a confederacy of the Athe- "nians, Argives, Eleans, and Matineans, against the Lacedæmonians, "who were this year at war with a neighbouring city, to wit, Argos."

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Not far from Sparta's gates and erst a friend
Is waging war against us: I would lead
My hardy squadrons forth t' assail the foe,
And utterly subdue them. To my wish
Soon as this great affair I shall have settled,
Hither will I return, and face to face,
When I my reasons to my Son-in-law
Have in the clearest terms propos'd, will hear
What he can urge; and if he punish her,
And for the future courteously to me
Demean himself, from me he in return
Shall meet with courtesy; but if he rage
He of my rage the dire effects shall feel:
For still such treatment as his deeds deserve
Shall he experience. But I am not hurt
By these injurious words of yours; for like
Some disembodied ghost, you have a voice,
Altho' you are not able to do aught
But merely speak. [*Exit* MENELAUS.

PELEUS.

Lead on, my Boy; here take
Thy station under these protecting arms;
And thou too, O thou miserable Dame,
Driven hither by the furious storm; at length
Into a quiet haven are ye come.

ANDROMACHE.

On thee and thy descendants may the Gods
Shower every blessing, venerable man,
For having sav'd this child, and wretched me;
Yet O beware, lest in some lonely spot
They suddenly assail us, and by force
Drag me away, perceiving thou art old,
That I am a weak woman, and my son
Is but an infant: all precautions use,
Else we, who have escap'd them, may again
Be caught.

PELEUS.

Forbear to utter, in such language

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As this, the dictates of a woman's fear.
Advance, who dares to touch you? he shall weep.
For with the blessing of th' immortal Gods,
And by unnumber'd troops of valiant horse,
And infantry supported, I bear rule
Over the Phthian land. I am robust,
Nor, as you deem, impair'd by palsied age.
Were I, oppos'd in battle, but to look
On such a man as this, old as I am,
An easy conquest soon should I obtain.
Superior is the veteran, if with courage
Inspir'd, to many youths: for what avails
A vigorous body with a coward's heart?

[*Exeunt* PELEUS, ANDROMACHE, *and* MOLOSSUS.

CHORUS.

ODE.

I.

My wish were this; or never to be born,
Or to descend from generous Sires, and share
The blessings which attend a wealthy heir.
If heaviest woes assail, ne'er left forlorn
Without a friend are they of nobler race,
Hereditary trophies deck their head:
The records of the brave with joy we trace,
No distant age their memory can efface,
For virtue's torch unquench'd pours radiance o'er the dead

II.

Better is conquest, when we gain our right
By no reproachful means, no deeds of shame,
Than if to envy we expose our fame,
And trample on the laws with impious might.
Such laurels which at first too sweetly bloom,
Ere long are wither'd by the frost of time,
And scorn pursues their wearers to the tomb.
I in my houshold or the state presume
To seek that power alone which rules without a crime.

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III.

O Veteran, sprung from Æacus, thy spear,
Chill'd the Lapithæ with fear,
And from their hills the Centaurs drove.
When Glory call'd, and prosperous gales
Swell'd the Argo's daring sails,
Intrepid didst thou pass that strait
Where ruin oft the crashing bark attends,
And ocean's foam descends
From the Symplegades' obstructing height.
Next didst thou land on perjur'd Ilion's shore,
With Hercules illustrious Son of Jove,
Then first its bulwarks stream'd with gore:
Till crown'd with fame a partner of his toil,
Europe again thou sought'st and Phthia's frozen soil.

THE NURSE OF HERMIONE, CHORUS.

NURSE.

How doth a rapid series of events
The most disastrous, O my dearest friends,
This day invade us! for within these doors
Hermione my Mistress, by her Sire
Forsaken, and grown conscious of the guilt
She hath incurr'd, by that attempt to murder
Andromache and her unhappy Son,
Resolves to die, because she dreads, lest fir'd
With indignation at her guilt, her Lord
Should cast her forth with scorn, or take away
Her life, because she purpos'd to have slain
The innocent. The servants who attend
Can hardly by their vigilance prevent her
From fixing round her neck the deadly noose,
Or snatch the dagger from her hand, so great
Is her affliction, and she now confesses
That she has done amiss. My strength's exhausted
In striving to withhold my royal Mistress
From perishing by an ignoble death.

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But enter ye these mansions, and attempt
To save her life, for strangers can persuade
Far better than old friends.

CHORUS.

We hear the voice
Of her attendants from within confirm
Th' intelligence thou hither cam'st to bring:
That hapless woman seems just on the point
Of shewing with what rage she by her guilt
Is hurried on: for lo she rushes forth
From yon abodes, already hath she scap'd
Her servants' hands, and is resolv'd to die.

HERMIONE, NURSE, CHORUS.

HERMIONE.

Ah me! these ringlets how will I tear off,
How rend my cheeks!

NURSE.

What mean'st thou, O my Daughter?
Wilt thou thus injure that fair frame?

HERMIONE.

Away,
O thou slight veil, I pluck thee from my head,
And toss thy scatter'd fragments in the air.

NURSE.

Cover thy bosom with the decent robe.

HERMIONE.

Why with a robe my bosom should I hide?
The crimes I have committed 'gainst my Lord
Are clear, well-known, and cannot be conceal'd.

NURSE.

Griev'st thou because thou hast form'd schemes to slay
Thy rival?

HERMIONE.

I with many groans bewail
Those hostile darings, execrable wretch,
Wretch that I am, an object of just hate
To all mankind.

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NURSE.

Thy Husband such offence
Will pardon.

HERMIONE.

From my hand why didst thou snatch
The sword? restore, restore it, O my friends,
That I this bosom may transpierce. Why force me
To quit yon pendent noose?

NURSE.

In thy distraction
Shall I forsake and leave thee thus to die?

HERMIONE.

Where shall I find (inform me, O ye Fates),
The blazing pyre, ascend the craggy rock,
Plunge in the billows, or amidst the woods
On a steep mountain waste the life I loathe,
That after death the Gods beneath may take me
To their protection?

CHORUS.

Why would'st thou make efforts
So violent? some mischiefs sent by Heaven
Sooner or later visit all mankind.

HERMIONE.

Me like a stranded bark, thou, O my Sire,
Hast left forsaken and without an oar.
To thee I owe my ruin. I no longer
In these my bridal mansions can reside.
To the propitious statues of what God
With suppliant haste shall I repair, or fall
At a slave's knees, myself an abject slave?
I from the land of Phthia, like a bird
Upborne on azure wings, would speed my flight,
Or imitate that (16) ship whose dashing oars
Twixt the Cyanean straits first urg'd their way.

NURSE.

As little, O my Daughter, can I praise

(16) The Argo.

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That vehemence which caus'd thee to transgress
Against the Trojan Dame, as these thy fears
Which are immoderate. For such slight offence
Thy Lord, misled by the pernicious tongue
Of a Barbarian woman, from his couch
Will not expell thee; for thou art not his
By right of conquest, borne from vanquish'd Troy;
But thee, the Daughter of a mighty King,
He with abundant dower, and from a city
Most flourishing, receiv'd: nor will thy Sire,
His child forsaking, as thou dread'st, permit thee
To be cast forth: but enter these abodes,
Nor shew thyself without, lest some affront
Thou should'st receive if haply thou art seen
Before these doors. [*Exit* NURSE.

CHORUS.

Behold a man, whose dress
Is of such different fashion that it speaks
The foreigner, comes swiftly from the gate.

ORESTES, HERMIONE, CHORUS.

ORESTES.

Is this th' abode of great Achilles' son,
The regal mansion, O ye foreign Dames?

CHORUS.

It is as thou hast said. But who art thou
That ask'st this question?

ORESTES.

Agamemnon's Son,
And Clytemnestra's: but my name's Orestes:
I to Dodona, th' oracle of Jove,
Am on my road; but since I now have reach'd
The land of Phthia, first would I enquire
How fares Hermione, the Spartan Dame,
My kinswoman; doth she yet live and prosper?
For though from me far distant be the land
In which she now resides, she still is dear.

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HERMIONE.

O son of Agamemnon, who thus make
Your seasonable appearance, like the haven
To mariners amidst a furious storm,
Take pity, I implore you by those knees,
On me a wretch whose inauspicious fortunes
You witness. Hence around your knees I fling
These arms, which ought to prove of equal force
With hallow'd branches by the suppliant borne.

ORESTES.

What's this? am I deceiv'd? or do my eyes
Indeed behold the Queen of these abodes,
And Menelaus' Daughter?

HERMIONE.

Th' only child
Whom to the Spartan Monarch Helen bore.
Mistake me not.

ORESTES.

O Phœbus, healing power,
Protect us. But what dire mischance hath happen'd?
Or from the Gods, or human foes, proceed
The evils thou endur'st?

HERMIONE.

Some from myself,
But others from the Husband whom I wedded;
The rest from one of the immortal Gods.
I utterly am ruin'd.

ORESTES.

What afflictions
Can any woman who's yet childless feel
But those which from her nuptial union spring?

HERMIONE.

Hence these distempers of the soul arise,
And well do you anticipate my words.

ORESTES.

Enamour'd with another, is thy Lord
False to thy bed?

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HERMIONE.

He loves a captive Dame,
The wife of Hector.

ORESTES.

This of which thou speak'st
Is a great evil, when one man possesses
Two wives.

HERMIONE.

'Twas thus, till I aveng'd the wrong.

ORESTES.

Didst thou with arts familiar to thy sex
Plot 'gainst thy rival's life?

HERMIONE.

I would have kill'd
Her and her spurious Son.

ORESTES.

Hast thou dispatch'd them?
Or were they skreen'd from their impending fate?

HERMIONE.

Old Peleus to these worthless objects shew'd
Too great a reverence.

ORESTES.

Was there any friend
Ready to aid thee in the purpos'd slaughter?

HERMIONE.

My Sire, who for this cause from Sparta came.

ORESTES.

Yet by that aged man was he subdu'd?

HERMIONE.

Abash'd he fled, and left me here alone.

ORESTES.

I understand thee well: thy Husband's wrath
Thou fear'st, for what thou'st done.

HERMIONE.

The fact you know:
Hence justly will he take away my life.
What can be said? yet by immortal Jove,
Our Grandsire, I conjure you, send me far

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From these domains, or to my Father's house.
Had but these walls a voice, they would proclaim
The sentence of my exile, for the land
Of Phthia hates me. If my Lord return
From Phœbus' oracle, for the misdeeds
I have committed, he will strike me dead,
Or force me to become that Harlot's slave
Whom erst I rul'd.

ORESTES.

By some will it be ask'd
Whence then into such errors didst thou fall?

HERMIONE.

My ruin I derive from the admission
Of these vile women, who inflam'd my pride
By uttering these rash words; "Wilt thou endure
"Beneath thy roof that odious slave who shares
"Thy bridal couch? by Juno, aweful Queen,
"I would not suffer such a wretch to breathe
"In my polluted chamber." When I heard
The language utter'd by these crafty Sirens,
Artificers of mischief, who, to suit
Their purpose, in persuasive strains display'd
The power of eloquence; I was puff'd up
With folly: for what need had I to hold
My Lord in reverence while possess'd of all
That I could wish? abundant wealth was mine,
O'er these abodes I reign'd, and any children
I to my Husband might hereafter bear
Would be legitimate; but hers, by mine
In strict subjection held, a spurious race.
But never, never (I this truth repeat)
Should wedded men, who have the gift of reason,
Let women have a free access, and visit
Their consort. For they teach her evil lessons:
Urg'd by the hopes of lucre, one corrupts
Her chastity; a second hath already
Transgress'd herself, and wishes that her friend
May be as vicious: many by their lust

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Are led astray: hence to their Husband's house
A train of mischief rises. Guard the doors
Of your abodes with locks and massive bars;
Since from the intrusion of these female guests,
No good, but mischiefs numberless ensue.

CHORUS.

Thou to thy tongue hast given too free a scope
In thus aspersing the whole female race:
Thy present woes indeed our pardon claim;
Yet every woman is in duty bound,
To gloss o'er the misconduct of her sex.

ORESTES.

Wisdom pertain'd to him who taught mankind
To hear the reasons by both parties urg'd
In a debate. Aware of the confusion
In these abodes, and of the strife 'twixt thee
And Hector's wife, I staid (17) not to observe
Whether thou in this house would'st still remain,
Or through a fear of yonder captive Dame
Abandon it: I therefore hither came,
Nor waited for intelligence from thee.
And if a satisfactory account
Of thy proceedings thou to me canst give,
I will convey thee hence. For thou, who erst
Wert mine, with this thy present Husband liv'st,
Through the perfidious conduct of thy Sire,
Who ere he enter'd the domains of Troy
Affianc'd thee, to me, and then, to him
Who now possesses thee, again engag'd,
If he the Phrygian city should subdue.
But I forgive thy Father for this wrong,
When hither great Achilles' Son return'd,
And to the Bridegroom sued that he would loose
Thy plighted hand; of all my various fortunes
Informing him, and of my present woes;

(17) Instead of μιμνω, I here take the liberty of reading ω μιμνω, non manebam, with Dr. Musgrave and Brunck, it being an alteration which the context seems to require.

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How feasible it were for me to wed
Among my friends, but that for such an exile
As I am, driven from my paternal throne,
'Twould not be easy to obtain a Consort
In any foreign land: on this he grew
More arrogant, and bitterly reproach'd me
Both with my Mother's murder, and those Furies
Whose blood-stain'd visages inspire dismay.
By the misfortunes of my house bow'd down
To earth, I griev'd indeed, but grieving bore
The weight of these calamities, and reft
Of thee my Bride, reluctantly departed.
But since thy fortunes now have undergone
A change so unexpected: and involv'd
In woe, thou stand'st aghast; from these abodes
Thee will I take and to thy Sire convey.
For wond'rous is the force of kindred ties;
And in misfortunes nought exceeds the friend
Who from the self-same house derives his birth.

HERMIONE.

My Father will take care how to dispose
Of me in marriage, nor is it my province
Such question to decide. But, O convey me
From these loath'd mansions with the utmost speed,
Lest when my Husband at his first return
Enters the doors, he intercept my flight;
Or, hearing that I leave his Grandson's house,
Peleus pursue me with his rapid steeds.

ORESTES.

Be of good cheer against that aged man,
And from thy furious Lord, Achilles' Son,
Who treated me with scorn, fear nought; this hand
Hath with such cautious artifice prepar'd
For him th' inevitable snares of death,
Of which no previous mention will I make:
But when it is accomplish'd, this exploit
Shall on the rock of Delphi be proclaim'd.
I who my Mother slew, if th' armed friends

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Whom I have station'd in the Pythian realm
Observe their oaths, will teach him that he ought
To have abstain'd from wedding any Dame
Betroth'd to me. He in an evil hour
Shall claim atonement for his Father's death
Of Phœbus mighty king; nor shall repentance
For these audacious blasphemies, avail
To save the miscreant on whose impious head
Apollo wreaks just vengeance; by his wrath
O'ertaken, and entangled in my snares,
He wretchedly shall perish. For the Gods
Subvert the prosperous fortunes of their foes,
Nor suffer Pride to rear her towering crest.

[*Exeunt* ORESTES *and* HERMIONE.

CHORUS.

O D E.

I. 1.

Phœbus, thou God who with a mound
Of stately towers didst Ilion's rock surround;
And thou, O Neptune, ruler of the main,
Born swiftly by thy azure steeds
In a light car, who cleav'st the watery plain;
After exerting with unweary'd toil
Such skill as human works exceeds,
'Gainst wretched Troy when Mars his javelin bore,
Why, faithless to that chosen soil,
Left ye your city drench'd in gore?

I. 2.

The steeds ye yok'd on Simios' banks
Whirl'd many a chariot thro' the broken ranks;
No hero gather'd in that stubborn fray
One laurel to adorn his head:
Phrygia's illustrious rulers swept away,
Took their last voyage to a distant shore,
And mingled with the vulgar dead,
While the polluted altars ceas'd to gleam
Upwafting to the skies no more
Their frankincense in odorous steam.

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II. 1.

Slain by his Wife Atrides fell;
His furious Son sent to the shades of Hell
The murderess, and return'd th' unnatural deed,
That fatal stroke the God approv'd,
His oracles ordain'd that she should bleed,
When young Orestes at the inmost shrine
Was by an heavenly impulse mov'd,
His hands in gore maternal to imbrue.
O Phœbus, O thou Power divine,
How shall I think th' assertion true?

II. 2.

In Greece doth many a Dame complain
Chanting rude dirges for her children slain;
Others their native land reluctant leave,
And to a foreign Lord are brought.
Nor yet hast thou alone just cause to grieve,
Nor to thy friends hath Heaven's peculiar hate
These signal miseries wrought:
Victorious Greece still feels as deep a wound,
From whence the thunderbolt of fate
Thro' Phrygia scatter'd deaths around.

PELEUS, CHORUS.

PELEUS.

Answer my questions, O ye Phthian Dames,
For doubtful is the rumour I have heard,
That Menelaus' Daughter, when she left
This house, departed from the realm. I come
Anxious to learn if this account be true.
For 'tis their duty who remain at home
To guard the fortunes of their absent friends.

CHORUS.

What thou hast heard, O Peleus, is the truth,
And ill would it become me to conceal
The woes in which I deeply am involv'd:
Our royal Mistress from these walls is fled.

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PELEUS.

What fear'd she? say.

CHORUS.

The anger of her Lord,
Lest he from these abodes should cast her forth.

PELEUS.

Because she plotted to have slain the Boy?

CHORUS.

E'en so it was. Yon Captive too she dreaded,

PELEUS.

But from these mansions did she go, attended.
Or by her Father, or by whom?

CHORUS.

The Son
Of Agamemnon from this land convey'd her.

PELEUS.

What are his views? to take her for his Bride?

CHORUS.

Thy Grandson too he meditates to slay.

PELEUS.

Station'd in secret ambush, or resolv'd
To meet the dauntless warrior face to face?

CHORUS.

Beneath Apollo's unpolluted fane
With Delphi's citizens.

PELEUS.

Atrocious crime!
Ah me! will no one with his utmost speed
Go to the altar of the Pythian God,
And to our friends disclose what passes here,
Ere by his foes Achilles' Son is slain?

MESSENGER, PELEUS, CHORUS.

MESSENGER.

What evil tidings do I bring to you,
O aged Man, and all my Master's friends!

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PELEUS.

By a sad presage which affects my soul
I of th' impending evil am forewarn'd.

MESSENGER.

Know then, O Peleus, that your wretched Grandson
Is now no more, with such unnumber'd wounds
(17) He by the Delphic citizens transpiero'd,
And by that stranger from Mycene died.

CHORUS.

Alas! alas! but what resource is left
For thee, thou hoary veteran? do not fall;
Raise thyself up.

PELEUS.

To very nothing now
Am I reduc'd, I utterly am ruin'd:
The power of speech deserts me, and these limbs
Forget their office.

MESSENGER.

Hear me, and from earth
Arise, if, with th' assistance of your friends
You for this murder wish to be reveng'd.

(17) This passage is one of those on which Heath and Dr. Musgrave lay a principal stress, as proving that Orestes was present at the murder of Neoptolemus. It does not, I confess, strike me in the same light. Nor, on the supposition of Orestes having instigated the citizens of Delphi to the deed, but being absent at the time of its perpetration, can I look upon this sentence as in any respect less defensible than Homer's

Αλλα μι μοιρ' ολεσε, και Λητως εκγονος υιος,
Ανδρων δ' Ευφορβος· συ δε μι τριτος εξεναριζεις.

Il. L. 16. v. 849.

By fate and Phœbus was I first o'erthrown,
Euphorbus next; the third mean part thine own. POPE.

where Patroclus then lying at his last gasp, blends, in a manner nearly similar, the more remote, and immediate authors of his death, by saying that Apollo who had taken off his helmet, Euphorbus who slightly wounded him and fled, and Hector, to whom he speaks, and from whom he had just received the fatal wound, had all three slain him.

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PELEUS.

How hast thou compass'd wretched me, who stand
On the last verge of spiritless old age,
O cruel fate! say how the only Son
Of my deceas'd, my only Son, was slain.
These tidings tho' unwelcome would I hear.

MESSENGER.

After we reach'd Apollo's sacred realm,
While thrice the chariot of the sun perform'd
Its bright career, we satiated our eyes
With viewing all around. The circumstance
Which rais'd suspicion first, was this; the people
Who dwell within the temple of the God
Held frequent meetings, and in crowds assembled.
Meanwhile the Son of Agamemnon went
Though the whole city, and in every ear
Whisper'd malignant words like these: "Behold
"Him who is visiting the hallow'd shrine
"Of Phœbus (19) pil'd with gold, the treasures given

(19) The city of Delphi, in the province of Phocis, from its supposed central situation, frequently called the navel of the world, and actually in the midst of Greece, was the spot where Apollo established his oracle, after having slain the Python. The antient Poets and Historians speak of the riches contained in the temples of that God, both there, and at Delos, the place of his nativity, in terms the most hyperbolical. Χρυσω δ' αρα Δηλος απασα Βεβριθυι is an expression made use of in one of the Hymns ascribed to Homer; and in the ninth Book of the Iliad Achilles answers Ulysses, soliciting him to rejoin the confederate troops, by declaring that all the gold contained within the sacred walls at Delphi would be to him no equivalent for the loss of life. When Daris the Mede was sent by Darius to invade Greece, the inhabitants of Delos abandoned that island at his approach; but the barbarian so revered the sanctity of their temple, that he not only sent ambassadors to dispel their fears, but went himself to offer frankincense on their altar. But Delphi was exposed to a great number of sacrilegious outrages, which may probably be in some measure imputed to the circumstance of its being an inland town. Valois, in the third volume of the Academie des Inscriptions, has collected an account of the various plunderers who invaded Apollo's temple there, from the Son of Crius king of Eubœa down to Nero the Roman Emperor, in whose days it was so impoverished that he robbed it only of some brouze statues; among the rest, he inserts Neoptolemus as having

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" By all mankind; the miscreant comes again
" On the same purpose which first drew him hither,
" To overthrow the temple of the God."
Thro' the whole city hence an evil rumour
Went forth, and all the magistrates, to whom
The holy treasures were consign'd, assembled,
In secret counsels held, and plac'd a guard
Behind the massive columns in the fane.
We, unappris'd of this, meantime had caught
Some sheep, that fed amid Parnassus' grove,
And with our Delphic friends and Pythian seers
Approach'd the altar: some one said, " Young man,
" What vows on thy behalf shall we address
" To Phœbus? for what purpose art thou come?"
He answered, " To the God I wish to make
" A due atonement for my past offence,
" Because I erst from him with impious tongue
" Claim'd satisfaction for my Father's blood."
Hence did Orestes' calumnies appear
To have great weight, suggesting that my lord
Spoke an untruth, and that he hither came
With vile designs. Beneath the holy roof,
That to Apollo he might offer up
His prayers in that oracular abode,
He now advanc'd, and as they blaz'd, observ'd
The victims: here a troop with falchions arm'd

perished in such attempt. Pausanias, from whom the French writer has in a great measure extracted his narrative, speaking in another part of his tenth book of that hero's death, only says he was slain by a Priest of Apollo, whose name it seems was Machaireus, but soon effaces this stain on his memory by speaking of his apparition, together with the ghosts of three more deceased warriors, as aiding the Phocians in their engagement with Brennus the Gaul, who in a similar manner invaded these holy precincts. The first visit of Neoptolemus to Delphi, mentioned in the following lines, when immediately upon his return from Troy he arrogantly demanded satisfaction of Apollo for his Father's death, must naturally have impressed the inhabitants of that city, who were entirely devoted to the God, with most unfavourable dispositions towards a stranger, who appeared to them in the light of an audacious blasphemer.

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Skreen'd by the branching laurels stood; the Son
Of Clytemnestra was the sole (20) contriver
Of all these stratagems. Our Lord stood forth,
And, in the sight of this insidious band,
Ador'd the God: while they with their keen swords,
Ere he discern'd them, pierc'd Achilles' Son
Unsheath'd in mail. He instantly retreated;
For he as yet had by no deadly wound
Been smitten; but snatch'd up in his retreat
Those glittering arms which near the portals hung,
And stood a champion terrible to view,
Close to the blazing altar: with loud voice
He question'd the inhabitants of Delphi;
" Me who a pious votary hither come,
" Why, or for what offences, would ye slay?"
Although the number of his foes was great,

(20) Upon consulting the three first editions of this play, by Lascaris, Aldus, and Hervagius, I have the pleasure to find the omission of the punctuation after the words Ἐγὼ (proposed by Hardion, without citing any authorities in his support, Academie des Inscript. T. 8. p. 275) confirmed by them all. The republication of Hervagius, Basil, 1544. which has been followed by all the later editions I have met with, by the insertion of a comma, very materially alters the meaning of the word ὡς which I apprehend in this place (as it indisputably does in the 220th line of the Hercules Furens) signifies *Solus*, into *unus*, and thereby represents Orestes as present at the murder of Neoptolemus, which is totally inconsistent not only with every idea of the unities observed by the antient dramatic writers, and so rarely violated by Euripides, but with the speech made by Orestes on his quitting the stage with Hermione. The arguments made use of by Heath and Dr. Musgrave, in support of the vulgar punctuation, appear by no means conclusive. Though the critics, I am sensible, lay no great stress on the authority of Dictys Cretensis, who says that Orestes, hearing of Neoptolemus' intended expedition to Delphi, dispatched some of his most trusty friends thither to lie in wait for him at his arrival, and as soon as he had received certain accounts of his rival's death, he carried off Hermione; it may not be totally superfluous to observe, that the only material difference between his account and that of Euripides, taken notice of by Bachet Sr de Meziriac, in his very learned and valuable commentaries on Ovid's Epistles, is obviated by concurring with Lascaris, Aldus, Hervagius, and Hardion, in erasing the above mentioned comma, and (which is by far more important) the tragedy before us restored to that unity of time which has been thought so preposterously violated.

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None of them answer'd, but all hands hurl'd stones:
On every side assaulted by a storm
Thick as the falling snows, he warded off,
Extending the broad margin of his shield,
Each missile weapon: but of no avail
Was this resistance; for the spear, the shaft,
The dart, were thrown at once, and at his feet
Mixt instruments of sacrifice lay scatter'd.
Th' agility with which your Grandson shunn'd
The blows they aim'd, was wondrous to behold:
They in a circle gathering round, clos'd in,
Nor gave him space to breathe, till from the altar
Descending with a leap like that which bore
The (21) hapless Grecian Chief to Phrygia's coast;
He rush'd among them: like a flock of doves
Who see the hawk appear, they turn'd and fled:
In heaps on heaps promiscuous, many fell,
Some in the narrow passage wounded lay,
While others o'er them trampled, and their groans
Unholy echo'd through the hallow'd dome.
But, tranquil as the waters in a calm,
In golden arms my Lord resplendent stood,
Till from the inmost sanctuary burst forth
A deep-ton'd voice of horror, which impell'd
The recreant warriors to renew the fight:
Achilles' Son then smitten through the flank
With a keen sword, by one of Delphi fell
Who slew him, yet ignobly, with the aid
Of multitudes. But after he to earth
Was fallen, what sword transpierc'd him not, what hand

(21) The Τραικον Πηδημα here spoken of is by no means expressive of Neoptolemus's rushing upon immediate death by descending from the altar, if we apply it, with the Scholiast and Barnes, to Achilles leaping on the Trojan shore: because he evaded the oracle (which foretold that he who first set his foot on the enemies' land, should immediately be slain), by leaping upon his shield; but may with much more consistency be applied, according to Carmelli's idea, to Protesilaus, who followed Achilles, but, not using the same precaution, verified the prophecy, and was slain on the sea-coast by the sword of Hector.

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Threw not a stone to smite him? his whole frame,
So graceful erst, was with unnumber'd wounds
Disfigur'd: till at length his mangled corse,
Which stain'd the altar's basis, from the fane
Drench'd with the blood of victims they cast forth.
But gathering up with speed, his lov'd remains
To you we bear, O venerable man,
That o'er them you may shed the plenteous tear,
And grace them with sepulchral rites. Thus Phœbus,
Who prophesies to others, mighty King,
And deals out justice to th' admiring world,
Hath on Achilles' Son reveng'd himself,
And, like some worthless human foe, reviv'd
An antient grudge: how then can he be wise?

[*Exit* MESSENGER.

CHORUS.

But lo our royal Master, from the land
Of Delphi borne, approaches these abodes!
Wretched was he, by such untimely doom
O'ertaken: nor art thou, O aged man,
Less wretched than the slaughter'd youth: for thou
Into thy doors receiv'st Achilles' Son,
But not as thou could'st wish; thou too art fallen
Into affliction's snare.

PELEUS.

What piteous object
(Ah me!) do I behold, and with these hands
Receive into my house! we are undone,
We are undone, O thou Thessalian city;
I have no children, no descendants left,
To occupy these mansions. On what friend
Shall I a wretched sufferer turn my eyes,
And hope to find relief? O thou dear face,
Ye cheeks, ye hands! thee would to Heaven that Fate
In those embattled fields of Troy had slain
Beside the waves of Simois!

CHORUS.

He in death
Hence would have found renown; thou too, old man,

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Would'st have been happier.

PELEUS.

Thou, O wedlock, wedlock,
These mansions and my city hast o'erthrown.
My Grandson, thro' the inauspicious nuptials
By thee contracted, would to Heaven my gates
Had ne'er receiv'd that execrable fiend
Hermione, thy bane! O had she first
With thunderbolts been smitten! nor hadst thou,
Presumptuous mortal, charg'd the Delphic God
With having aim'd the shaft which slew thy Sire!

CHORUS.

I will awake the sad funereal dirge,
And wailing pay to my departed Lord
Such customary tribute as attends
The shades of mighty chiefs,

PELEUS.

Ah me! at once
With misery and old age bow'd down to earth,
I shed th' incessant tear.

CHORUS.

Thus hath the God
Ordain'd, the God's vindictive arm hath wrought
All these calamities.

PELEUS.

O most belov'd,
This house (ah me!) a desert hast thou left,
And me a miserable old man made childless.

CHORUS.

Before thy children, O thou aged man,
Thou should'st have died.

PELEUS.

Shall I not rend my hair,
And beat with desperate hands this hoary head?
O city! Phœbus hath of both my Sons
Depriv'd me.

CHORUS.

O thou miserable old man,
What evils hast thou witness'd and endur'd!
How wilt thou pass the remnant of thy life?

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PELEUS.

Childless, forlorn, no period to my woes
Can I discover, but till death must drink
The bitter potion.

CHORUS.

Sure the Gods in vain
Shower'd blessings on thy nuptials.

PELEUS.

Fled and wither'd
Is all our antient pomp.

CHORUS.

Alone thou mov'st
Around thy lonely house.

PELEUS.

I have no city.
Thee, O my sceptre, to the ground I cast,
And from yon dreary caverns of the main,
Daughter of Nereus, me wilt thou behold
Utterly ruin'd, groveling in the dust.

CHORUS.

Ha! what was it that mov'd? what form divine
Do I perceive? look there! ye Nymphs, attend,
With rapid passage through the fleecy clouds
Borne onward, some Divinity arrives
At Phthia's pastures, fam'd for generous steeds.

THETIS, PELEUS, CHORUS.

THETIS.

O Peleus, mindful of the ties which bound
Our plighted love, I hither from the house
Of Nereus come, and with these wholesome counsels
Begin; despair not, though thy present woes
Are grievous: for e'en I who should have borne
A race of children such as ne'er might cause
My tears to stream, have lost the Son who crown'd
Our hopes, Achilles, swift of foot, the first
Of Grecian heroes. But to thee, the motives
Which brought me hither, will I now relate;
O listen to my voice. Back to that altar

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Devoted to the Pythian God, convey
This body of Achilles' slaughter'd Son,
And bury it; so shall his tomb declare
(22) The murderous violence Orestes' band
Committed: but yon captive Dame, I mean
Andromache, on (23) Helenus bestow'd
In marriage, in Molossia's land must dwell,
And her young Son, the only royal branch
Which of the stem of Æacus remains;
From him in long succession shall a race
Of happy kings Molossia's sceptre wield:
Nor will our progeny, O aged man,
Be utterly extinct, when blended thus
With Ilion, still protected by the Gods,
Though by Minerva's stratagems it fell.

(22) This is another of the passages referred to by Heath in opposition to Hardion, accompanied with a hint that there is some handle for a reply; this handle is indeed so obvious that no man who consults his Lexicon can omit laying hold of it. Henry Stephens's Greek Thesaurus, V. 4. p. 419, swarms with authorities for the word χεὶρ being made use of to signify a band of troops: nor will the generality of the Latin versions here afford any aid to our opponents, the word manus being frequently and familiarly used in the same signification, as Dolopum manus, Virgil Æn. l. 2. v. 29.

"Here the Dolopean troops their station held." PITT.

(23) One of Priam's sons, frequently mentioned by Homer as eminent for his skill in Divination, on which account his absence is particularly regretted by the distressed Hecuba in the first of Euripides's Tragedies; Virgil's account is that Pyrrhus (or Neoptolemus), when he married Hermione, resigned his captive Andromache to Helenus, who, after the death of Pyrrhus, having obtained a portion of his dominions, received Æneas with great hospitality, and unfolded to him a variety of future events: Conon in his narration says, that after the death of Paris, Helenus and his Brother Deiphobus were competitors for Helen; but the latter having obtained the preference, Helenus retired in discontent to Mount Ida, where, by the advice of Calchas, the Greeks, who were besieging Troy, lay in wait for him, and took him prisoner. Sophocles, in his Philoctetes, ascribes this exploit to Ulysses alone in one of his nightly excursions. The captive Seer is charged with having betrayed his country, and purchased the favour of the Greeks by informing them that it was impossible to take Troy till they brought Neoptolemus from the isle of Scyros, and fabricated the wooden horse.

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But, as for thee, that thou may'st know the blessing
Of having wedded me, who am by birth
A Goddess and the Daughter of a God;
From all the ills which wait on human life
Releasing, thee immortal will I make
And incorruptible; with me a Goddess
In Nereus' watery mansions thou a God
Hereafter shalt reside, and from the waves
Emerging with dry feet, behold our Son
Achilles, to his parents justly dear,
Inhabiting that (24) isle whose chalky coasts

(24) The island here spoken of is supposed to be Leuca, situated near the coast of Sarmatia at the mouth of the Boristhenes. Philostratus's account of this island is, that it was raised from the sea by Neptune at the request of Thetis as an habitation for her son Achilles after his death: he adds "here were celebrated the nuptials of that hero with "Helen, *they long loved without having ever seen each other*, she being in "Ægypt while he besieged Troy." Such is the tradition derived from Herodotus the Father of Grecian history, which Euripides has followed in the Tragedy which bears the name of Helen: in the conference Teucer there holds with that Princess, who does not make herself known to him, she says *she heard* Achilles formerly came as a suitor to Helen: but his name is not inserted by Apollodorus in his list of Menelaus' unsuccessful rivals, which comprehends most of the other Grecian Princes who signalized themselves at Troy; and Homer ascribes to him the honour of coming to the siege as a volunteer, instead of being constrained by his oath. If we believe Lycophron, the Consort assigned to Achilles in this happy retreat. "Κυταϊκη πανδαμαχη," must have been Medea. But Antonimus Liberalis, in a part of his Metamorphoses extracted from writings of Nicander which are not now extant, says that Iphigenia, after residing in the dominions of Thoas, was in due time removed from thence to Leuca, where her nature being changed, she was endowed with perpetual youth, became a Goddess, and was united in wedlock to Achilles. Various are the opinions of Homer's commentators in regard to the place marked out in the last book of the Odyssey by the appellation of "λευκαδα Πετρην," whither Mercury leads the souls of Penelope's Suitors in their passage to the infernal regions: one circumstance, however, not unworthy of being remarked, is, that after proceeding from thence to the gates of the Sun, and the land of Dreams, they reach a meadow flowering with asphodel, where they find Achilles, Patroclus, Antilochus, and Ajax Telamon, the very heroes whom (adding the name of Ajax Oileus) Pausanias says, that Leonimus, being sent by the Delphic oracle to Leuca to be cured of a wound, told his countrymen at his return to Crotona, that he had seen on that island.

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Are lav'd by the surrounding Euxine deep.
But go to Delphi's city by the Gods
Erected, thither bear this weltering corse,
And when thou hast interr'd it, to this land
Return, and in that cave which through the rock
Of Sepia time hath worn, thy station keep
Till from the waves I with my sister choir
The fifty Nereids come, to bear thee hence.
Thou must endure the woes impos'd by fate,
For thus hath Jove ordain'd. But cease to grieve
For the deceas'd: for by the righteous Gods
The same impartial sentence is awarded
To the whole human race, and death's a debt
Which all must pay.

PELEUS.

Hail, venerable Dame,
Daughter of Nereus, my illustrious Wife:
For what thou dost is worthy of thyself,
And of thy progeny. I cease to grieve
At thy command, O Goddess, and will go,
Soon as my Grandson's corse I have interr'd,
To Pelion's cave, where first thy beauteous form
I in these arms receiv'd. The man whose choice
Is by discretion guided, should select
A Consort nobly born, and give his Daughters
To those of virtuous families, nor wish
To wed a Damsel sprung from worthless Sires,
Though to his house a plenteous dower she bring:
So shall he ne'er incur the wrath of Heaven.

CHORUS.

A thousand shapes our varying Fates assume,
The Gods perform what we could least expect,
And oft the things for which we fondly hop'd
Come not to pass: but Heaven still finds a clue
To guide our steps through life's perplexing maze.
And thus does this important business end.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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